

*MASTER
NEGATIVE
NO. 92-80638-11*

MICROFILMED 1992

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES/NEW YORK

as part of the
"Foundations of Western Civilization Preservation Project"

Funded by the
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Reproductions may not be made without permission from
Columbia University Library

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

The copyright law of the United States -- Title 17, United States Code -- concerns the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material...

Columbia University Library reserves the right to refuse to accept a copy order if, in its judgement, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of the copyright law.

AUTHOR:

DUBOIS, GUILLAUME

TITLE:

MEMOIRS OF CARDINAL
DUBOIS

PLACE:

LONDON

DATE:

1899

Master Negative #

92-80638-11

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

Original Material as Filmed - Existing Bibliographic Record

General Dubois, Guillaume, Cardinal, 1656-
Library 1723.
944 [Memoires secrets et inédits sur les
.033.9 Cours de France. English]
D855 Memoirs of Cardinal Dubois, tr. from
the French by Ernest Dowson. London,
Smithers, 1899.
2 v. port. 24 cm. (Secret memoirs
of the court of France during the
XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries.)

1. France--Court and courtiers. 2.
France--History--Louis XV, 1715-1774.
I. Dowson, Ernest Christopher, 1867-
1900, tr. II. Title. III. Series.

uc-main
A000078
am

840810
/PH

840810 NNC
84-B47579

Restrictions on Use:

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm
IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA IIA IB IIB

REDUCTION RATIO: 11X

DATE FILMED: 7/17

INITIALS BA

FILMED BY: RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS, INC WOODBRIDGE, CT

VOLUME 1

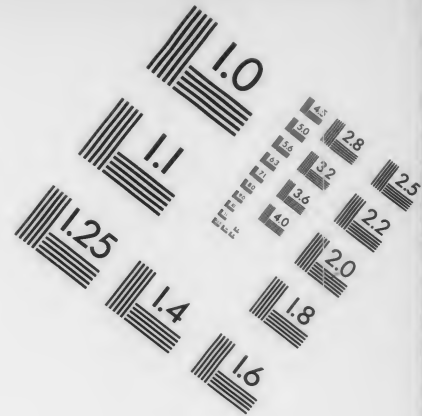
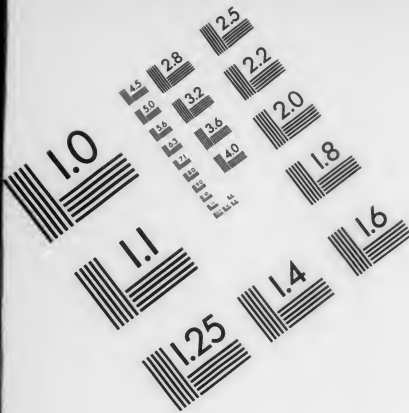


AIM

Association for Information and Image Management

1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

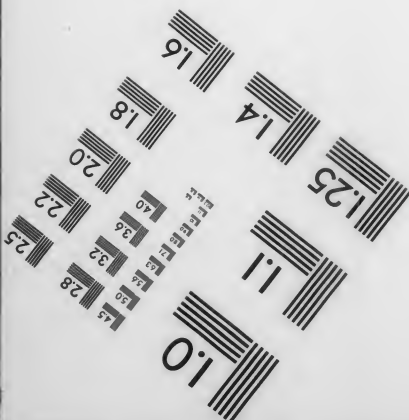
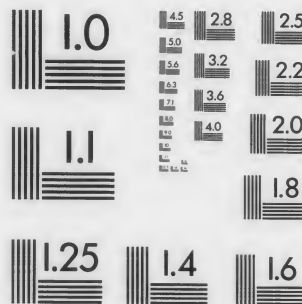
301/587-8202



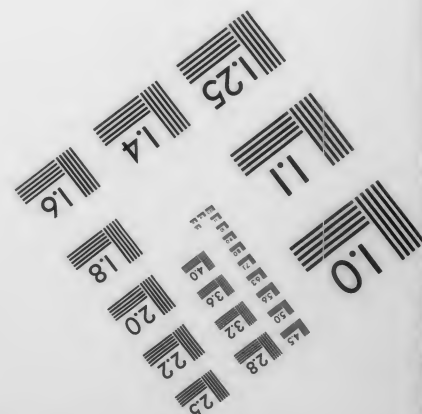
Centimeter



Inches



MANUFACTURED TO AIM STANDARDS
BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.



RS

NAL

IS



TD
RS

944.033.9 D855

Columbia University
in the City of New York

Library



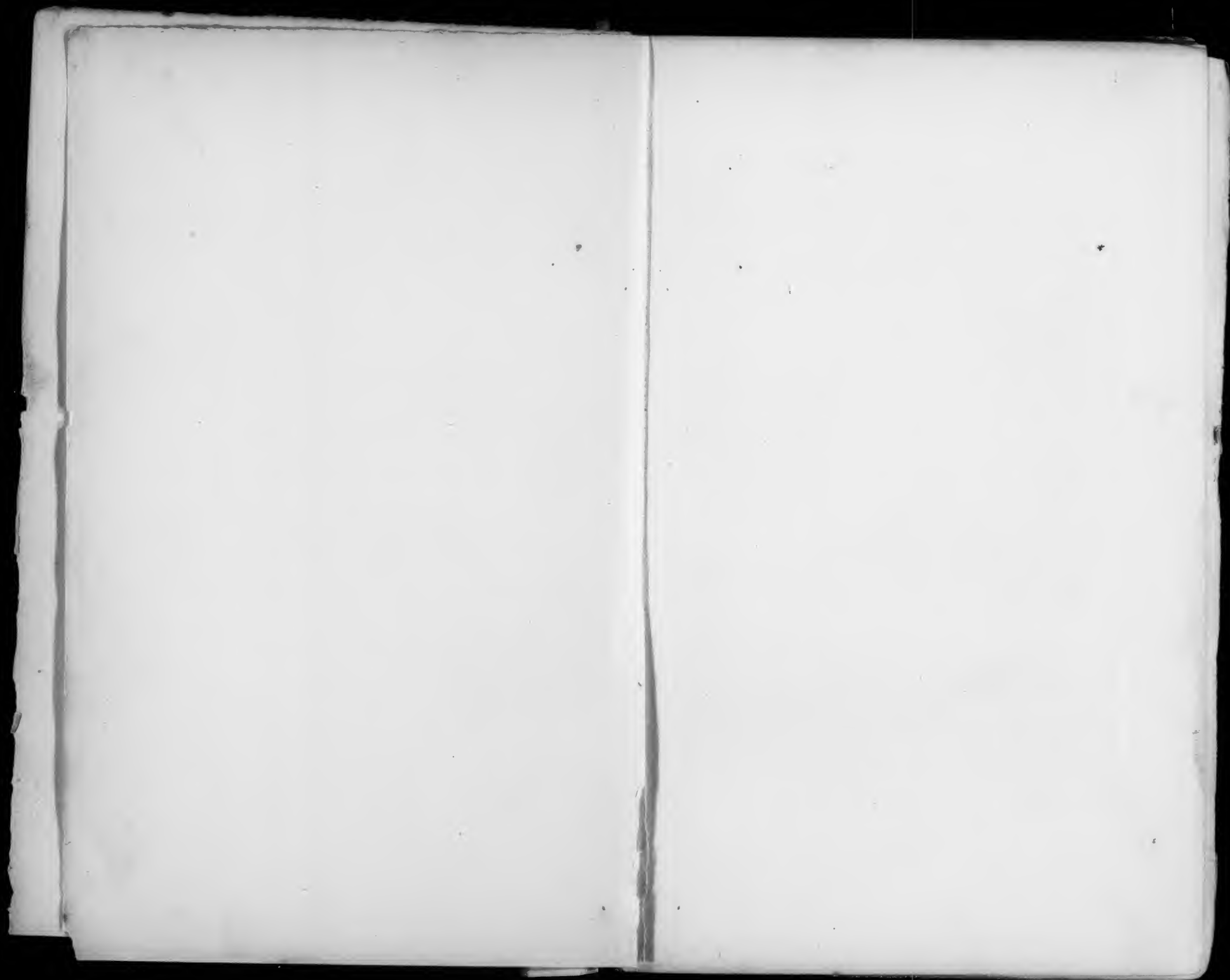
Special Fund

Given anonymously

Hq. web.

Tools

SECRET MEMOIRS OF THE
COURT OF FRANCE
DURING THE
XVIITH AND XVIIITH CENTURIES





GUILLAUME CARDINAL DUBOIS
Archevesque Duc de Cambray
Prince du S. Empire premier Ministre

COPIES
DRIVEN
1899

MEMOIRS
OF *Guillaume*
CARDINAL DUBOIS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY ERNEST DOWSON

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS
OF CARDINAL DUBOIS AND
THE DUC D'ORLÉANS



IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME ONE

LONDON
LEONARD SMITHERS AND CO
5 OLD BOND STREET W
1899

29 Aug 11 a.m.

11-4751

2 vols

CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE	PAGE xiii
CHAPTER I	I
Origin of these Memoirs—Birth of Dubois—His Parentage— Was he ever baptised?—The First Arms of an Apothecary— M. Lefebure—He enters the Jesuit College	
CHAPTER II	6
Dubois with the Jesuits—He does not Communicate—The Carnival—Dubois Scaramouch—Dubois tonsured—He leaves Brives-la-Gaillarde—Portrait of Dubois—M. de Gourgues, President of the Parliament of Bordeaux—Dubois Preceptor— Mademoiselle Pierrette—Dubois Married—Deliverance of Pierrette—The Second Father—Departure for Paris	
CHAPTER III	14
The Thorns of Paris—The Abbé Bodeau—Dubois and his Wife separate—Dubois Tutor to M. Trotier de Riancé—The College of Saint-Michel—M. Faure—The Scholars—Dame Françoise and Henri Boivin—The Evening Strolls—Dubois Tutor to young Maroy—M. Pluvant, Master of the Wardrobe to Monsieur—M. le Duc de Vendôme—The Stool: The Bishop of Parma and Alberoni—Dubois in Favour	
CHAPTER IV	24
A Prophecy—The Audiences of M. de Vendôme—M. Naslin, his Almoner—Monsieur, the Duc d'Orléans—Dubois in the Antechamber—Madame de Grancey, the Mistress of Monsieur —The Morning Visit and the Pinch of Snuff—The Rendezvous— Farewell to M. de Vendôme—The Presentation—M. de Saint- Laurent—Dubois enters as a Functionary at the Palais-Royal— The Pupil—The First Flattery	

CHAPTER V

PAGE
35

The Duc de Chartres—The Permission—Madame de Choiseul—The Duchesse d'Orléans—The Correspondence—The Grancey and the Chevalier de Lorraine—The Marquis de Villequier and M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris—The Family Portraits—The Supper—The Abbé de Chaulieu—The Marquis de La Fare—The Surgeon Felix—Madame d'Espagny, Mademoiselle Chouin and the Grand Dauphin

CHAPTER VI

46

M. de Saint-Laurent's Illness—The Capucins of the Louvre—Fagon, Physician to the King—Maria Theresa of Austria—Sensual Education of the Duc de Chartres—La Fontaine and Dubois—Madame de la Vieuville and the Duc de Chartres—Dubois in Danger of Disgrace—The *Choucroute* of the Duchesse d'Orléans—Dubois' Indigestion—The Chevalier de Lorraine—M. Thévenot—Dubois changes his Plan—The Lesson and Cardinal de Richelieu—Death of M. de Saint-Laurent—Racine—Praise of Dubois

CHAPTER VII

56

Dubois Sub-Governor—Blouin the Mathematician—The Quarrel of Madame de Grancey with Madame de Bouillon—New System of Education—The young Saint-Simon—Confidences—Madame de Castelnau and Madame de Vitry—Dubois unmask himself to the young Prince—The Promises—The *Valets-de-Chambre*

CHAPTER VIII

62

Anxieties and Cases of Conscience—The Little Gate in the Rue de Richelieu—The Fifty Thousand Crowns—The Ingénue—The Duc Louis de Bourbon—Monseigneur Total—The Fire and the Escape—The Dinner of M. de Louvois—M. de Coulanges and Mademoiselle de Serre—The Duc de Chartres' Acquirements

CHAPTER IX

PAGE
72

Dubois at Court—Beauty of Louis XIV—His Uncleanliness—His Gluttony—The Private Cover—His Love of Etiquette—The Thrashing at Marly—Petty Tyrannies—The King's Selfishness—His Journeys—Predicament of the Duchesse de Chevreuse and Chivalry of the Duc de Beauvilliers—The Sufferings of Madame de Maintenon—The King's Mistresses—Madame Henriette of England, Monsieur's First Wife—Madame's Death by Poison—Purnon First Major-Domo of Monsieur's Hotel—His Revelations—Recall of the Chevalier de Lorraine

CHAPTER X

82

Death of the Duc de la Vieuville—The New Governor—Mademoiselle, Duchesse de Montpensier—The Carmelites of the Rue Bouloy—Illness of Mademoiselle—The King's Anger—The Duc de Chartres' Extravagant Project—The Disguise—The Prince and Dubois in the Parlour—Mademoiselle de La Vallière—Madame de Montespan—The King at the Carmelites—The Duc de Chartres reveals himself to La Vallière—Escape from the Convent—The Duc's Regrets

CHAPTER XI

94

The Royal Family in 1688—The Grand Dauphin—His Timidity, Economy, and Sensuality—His Amours—Mademoiselle Fleury—Mademoiselle Chouin, married to Monseigneur—The Court of Meudon—The Grande Dauphine—The Perfumed Gloves—The Princesse de Conti—The Alleged Letters—The Comte de Vermandois—His Debauchery

CHAPTER XII

105

Children of the King and Madame de Montespan—They are legitimatised—Character of the Duc du Maine—The Comte de Toulouse—Mademoiselle de Nantes—Her Marriage with Monsieur le Duc—Character of Monsieur le Prince—M. Rose—The Foxes and the Imitation of Samson—His Mistresses—The Duchesse de Lude—The *Grande Mademoiselle*—Her Marriage with M. de Lauzun—Despair after his Arrest—The Price of his Liberty—A Gambler's Jest

CHAPTER XIII PAGE
115

Dubois presented to the King and Madame de Maintenon—A Pious Evening—The Perfumes—Origin of Dubois' Fortune—D' Aubigné, Madame de Maintenon's Brother—His Eccentric Conduct—His Acquaintances in the Tuileries—The Ears of Père La Chaise—Arrival of the King and Queen of England—La Fontaine and the Abbé Grécourt—The Interview at Chatou—Reconciliation with Lauzun—The Queen's Wit—Greatness of Louis XIV—Pettness of James II—Madame and the False Princesses Palatine

CHAPTER XIV 130

Negotiations for the Marriage of the Duc de Chartres—The Secret Door—Père La Chaise—The Nocturnal Rendezvous—Compact of Dubois with Madame de Maintenon—He prepares the Marriage of the Duc de Chartres—Mademoiselle de Blois—Dubois with Madame—Her Anger—The Interview with the King—Dubois retires during the Rejoicings

CHAPTER XV 141

Dubois returns to the Palais-Royal—The Duc de Chartres as a Husband—The Gratitude of the Great—State of Dubois' Fortune in 1692—The Siege of Namur—Vauban—The Grand-Prior of France—M. de Rosen—Battle of Steinkerque—Dubois' Prowess—Return to Versailles

CHAPTER XVI 154

Mortality—Death of La Fontaine—Of the Princess of Orange and of M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris—Madame de Lesdiguières—Illness of Dubois—Doctor Carrette and his Elixir—The Quarrel—Thomas Corneille—Mignard's Portrait of Madame de Maintenon—Sainte-Françoise—Madame de Sévigné—Madame de Coulanges—Gentleman or Major-Domo—The Hands—Dubois' Credit suffers

CHAPTER XVII PAGE
164

Origins of Massillon—His Portrait and Character—Quietism—Madame Guyon—Her Confessor, Père Lacombe—*Pure Love*—Fénélon—Bossuet—A Spiritual Gathering—Dubois among the Elect—Madame Guyon's Arrest—The End of Quietism—Ninon de Lenclos—Her Portrait at the Age of Eighty

CHAPTER XVIII 174

Death of the Marquis d'Arcy—The Duc de Chartres and his Sister—Their Illicit Love—Marriage of the Latter—The Maid of Honour—Madame de Ventadour—The Ladies of the Opera—Dubois behind the Scenes—Mademoiselle Maupin—Dumesnil—The Convent—Cane and Sword—Monsieur's Ball—The Duel—Descoteaux—Baron—The Duc de Chartres and the Actress

CHAPTER XIX 189

Dubois as Diplomatist—M. de Barbezieux—M. de Tallard, French Ambassador to England—The *Chevalier Dubois* in London—Saint-Evremond and the Duchesse de Mazarin—Quotation from a Letter of her Chaplain—Lord Stanhope—Dubois in English Pay—Romans and Stuarts—Denunciations of M. de Tallard—The *Lettre-de-Cachet*—Dubois at Marlay—English Women

CHAPTER XX 201

The Death of Monsieur—Indifference of the Court—Dubois takes the Tidings to the Royal Family

CHAPTER XXI 208

The Climax of the Duc d'Orléans' Amours with the Desmares—Baron as Apothecary—The Syringe and the Night-Cap—Dubois expelled from Court—M. Ledru the Ironmonger—His Wife—Hospitality, Jealousy and Avarice—The Sign of the Croix-de-Fer—The Imprisoned Husband—Virtue in an Apron—The Happy Cuckold—M. d'Argenson

CHAPTER XXII	PAGE 220
Axiom of Louis XIV—Père de La Rue—Dubois' Intrigue— Mademoiselle d'Orléans—Her Portrait—Her Vices and Educa- tion—The Duc de Berri—His Physical and Moral Portrait— Madame de Saint-Simon—The Chamber-maid of M. de Berri— Confidence to the Duc d'Orléans—The Marriage—Its Con- sequences—Dubois meets his Wife	
CHAPTER XXIII	232
Death of M. le Prince, M. le Duc, and the Prince de Conti— Prophecy of Nostradamus—Père Le Tellier, the King's Confessor —Small-Pox—Death of Monseigneur—Sickness and Death of the Dauphine and Dauphin—The Autopsy—Calumnies against the Duc d'Orléans—The Accusation of Père Arnoux—The Duc d'Orléans insulted by the People—His Justification to the King —Madame de Verrue—The Antidote—Confrontation with the Duc du Maine	
CHAPTER XXIV	251
Dubois in Love—Annette the Widow—Dubois and the Duc d'Orléans as Rivals—The Broken Window—Portrait of Annette —Samuel Bernard—His Ugliness—The Marriage Proposal—The Demoiselles Loyson—Bigamy—The Wedding Supper—Rights of a Husband—The Substitute—Husband and Lover—The Widow's Death—Letter from Madame Dubois	
CHAPTER XXV	267
The Post of Secretary to the Duc de Berri—Dubois solicits it —Longpierre—Infamous Rumours about the Duchesse de Berri —Her Lover, La Haye—A Husband's Grievances—The Kick	

PREFATORY NOTE

ON entering into the Church of Saint-Roch in the Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris, there may be seen, in the right aisle, a little chapel, conspicuous among the rest as being devoid of all religious ornament. It is known as the *Chapelle des Monuments*. Amid the tombs which deck its floor, and the marble busts which line its walls, there stands a monument in white marble, whose imposing form at once arrests the gaze of the visitor. It represents a Cardinal, in full ceremonial dress, kneeling with joined hands, in the attitude of prayer. The face, turned sideways, is strangely expressive. Subtlety and determination are its most strongly-marked characteristics. A smile at once ironic and gay plays about the mouth. The narrow yet lofty brow is furrowed with many wrinkles. It is the face of the man whom history portrays as one of the most intriguing and ambitious, one of the most polished and subtle, of all French Prime Ministers and Cardinals.

Such is the tomb of Cardinal Dubois. It is the work of Guillaume Coustou, the well-known sculptor of the *Chevaux de Marly* in the Champs Elysées.

Guillaume Dubois, born in 1656 at Brives-la-Gaillarde, was the son, either of an apothecary or of a doctor of that town. After studying at Brives, and at the college of Saint-Michel in Paris, he became tutor to the young Duc de Chartres, afterwards Duc d'Orléans and Regent. The gift of a rich abbey recompensed him for having induced his pupil to marry Mademoiselle de Blois, a natural daughter of Louis XIV and

Madame de Montespan. On the death of the King, Dubois was made a Councillor of State, and, from that time forth, he devoted himself to diplomacy, in the service of which he showed a rare delicacy of tact as well as an indefatigable activity. To his address were due the friendly relations which for long existed between George I and the Regent. In 1717, he concluded, along with Lord Stanhope, the Triple Alliance of The Hague, between England, France, and Holland, which had for its object the suppression of Spanish interests. On his return to France, Dubois was made Minister of Foreign Affairs. He outwitted the Cellamare conspiracy, and robbed Philip V of Spain of the services of his minister Alberoni. In 1720 the Regent nominated him Archbishop of Cambray. In the following year Dubois was made a Cardinal, and in 1722 he became Prime Minister. His death took place on August 10th, 1723.

As regards the authenticity of these memoirs, there are differences of opinion. The anonymous writer of the introduction to the first French edition, published in Paris in 1829, gives the following story of their authorship and the difficulties which attended their publication:—

"These Memoirs," says this anonymous writer, who in all probability was M. Paul Lacroix, "which come to an end in the early part of the year 1723, appear, from several passages they contain, to have been begun only in the preceding year. It was then that Dubois, worn out by a long life of Epicurean excess, and still more by the cares of office, was able, for the first time in his long career of successful intrigue, to enjoy a certain repose. His motive for writing them lay in his desire to answer the atrocious calumnies which his enemies heaped upon him both in prose and verse. They were written entirely by his own hand, on

the Tuesdays and Saturdays of each week, and with the aid only of his prodigious memory. When Dubois died, the manuscript was stolen by one of his secretaries, named Lavergne. This fellow secretly carried it off, with the intention of, later on, selling it dearly to Dubois' heirs. Dubois, brother of the deceased, a director of civil engineers, had heard of these Memoirs, and was not a little astonished at not finding them in the inheritance. As their publication would seriously compromise the Regent as well as himself, he spared no trouble to discover into whose hands they had fallen. His efforts were, however, without result.

"Lavergne waited during several years for the death, or at least the disgrace, of the principal friends of the Cardinal, and when he thought he could do so without danger, he quietly proposed to several interested persons the acquisition of the manuscript. It was then that the Court at Versailles heard of the existence of these memoirs, and many persons there were in the utmost fear of their publication. Monsieur d'Argenson, Lieutenant of Police, was set on the track of Lavergne, who was arrested and sent to the Bastille. The Memoirs were taken from him and buried among the archives of the Foreign Office.

"It was there, some years later, that they fell into the hands of the Comte de Maurepas. Maurepas took a singular delight in reading the manuscript, and he it was who first discovered the literary value as also the historic importance of these Memoirs. Maurepas was in the habit of having copies made—for his own personal use—of such books as pleased him, which for certain reasons it was inadvisable to publish. He therefore had the whole of the original Dubois manuscript copied, and he kept this copy among his own private papers.

"On Maurepas' death, which occurred in 1781, this copy

Madame de Montespan. On the death of the King, Dubois was made a Councillor of State, and, from that time forth, he devoted himself to diplomacy, in the service of which he showed a rare delicacy of tact as well as an indefatigable activity. To his address were due the friendly relations which for long existed between George I and the Regent. In 1717, he concluded, along with Lord Stanhope, the Triple Alliance of The Hague, between England, France, and Holland, which had for its object the suppression of Spanish interests. On his return to France, Dubois was made Minister of Foreign Affairs. He outwitted the Cellamare conspiracy, and robbed Philip V of Spain of the services of his minister Alberoni. In 1720 the Regent nominated him Archbishop of Cambray. In the following year Dubois was made a Cardinal, and in 1722 he became Prime Minister. His death took place on August 10th, 1723.

As regards the authenticity of these memoirs, there are differences of opinion. The anonymous writer of the introduction to the first French edition, published in Paris in 1829, gives the following story of their authorship and the difficulties which attended their publication:—

"These Memoirs," says this anonymous writer, who in all probability was M. Paul Lacroix, "which come to an end in the early part of the year 1723, appear, from several passages they contain, to have been begun only in the preceding year. It was then that Dubois, worn out by a long life of Epicurean excess, and still more by the cares of office, was able, for the first time in his long career of successful intrigue, to enjoy a certain repose. His motive for writing them lay in his desire to answer the atrocious calumnies which his enemies heaped upon him both in prose and verse. They were written entirely by his own hand, on

the Tuesdays and Saturdays of each week, and with the aid only of his prodigious memory. When Dubois died, the manuscript was stolen by one of his secretaries, named Lavergne. This fellow secretly carried it off, with the intention of, later on, selling it dearly to Dubois' heirs. Dubois, brother of the deceased, a director of civil engineers, had heard of these Memoirs, and was not a little astonished at not finding them in the inheritance. As their publication would seriously compromise the Regent as well as himself, he spared no trouble to discover into whose hands they had fallen. His efforts were, however, without result.

"Lavergne waited during several years for the death, or at least the disgrace, of the principal friends of the Cardinal, and when he thought he could do so without danger, he quietly proposed to several interested persons the acquisition of the manuscript. It was then that the Court at Versailles heard of the existence of these memoirs, and many persons there were in the utmost fear of their publication. Monsieur d'Argenson, Lieutenant of Police, was set on the track of Lavergne, who was arrested and sent to the Bastille. The Memoirs were taken from him and buried among the archives of the Foreign Office.

"It was there, some years later, that they fell into the hands of the Comte de Maurepas. Maurepas took a singular delight in reading the manuscript, and he it was who first discovered the literary value as also the historic importance of these Memoirs. Maurepas was in the habit of having copies made—for his own personal use—of such books as pleased him, which for certain reasons it was inadvisable to publish. He therefore had the whole of the original Dubois manuscript copied, and he kept this copy among his own private papers.

"On Maurepas' death, which occurred in 1781, this copy

passed into the hands of a certain writer named Mercier, in whose family it remained, until it was at length published in 1829. When search was made for the original manuscript it could no longer be found."

Such is the story which was current in Paris at the time of the first publication of these Memoirs. The evidence of recent researches tends rather to regard the work as apocryphal. The Comte de Seillac, in his *l'Abbé Dubois*, published in 1862, one of the most important works on the life of the Cardinal, disregards the Memoirs altogether. M. Ch. Aubertin, in his interesting *L'Esprit publique au XVIII^e siècle*, published in 1873, comes to the conclusion that they are probably spurious; while M. Quérard, in his *Les Supercheries littéraires dévoilées*, 1869, decides that they were composed by the above-mentioned Paul Lacroix, and founded on a certain *Vie Privée du Cardinal Dubois*, published in London in 1789.

After all, is the question of the authenticity of these Memoirs of such importance as to cause the reader, who turns over their facile pages, the embarrassment of an instant's regret? It can scarcely be said that it is. Whether from the pen of Dubois himself or not, they form one of the most interesting and striking documents relating to the times of the Regency, all the amiable characteristics of which they faithfully reflect.

MEMOIRS OF CARDINAL DUBOIS

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THESE MEMOIRS—BIRTH OF DUBOIS—HIS PARENTAGE
—WAS HE EVER BAPTISED?—THE FIRST ARMS OF AN
APOTHECARY—M. LEFEBURE—HE ENTERS THE JESUIT
COLLEGE

I AM growing old, as my infirmities begin to warn me. As I sought the other day for the date of my birth, passing from memory to memory, I decided to make, and set down in writing, an examination of my conscience. I think I am better than my reputation; moreover, there is no maid so homely that she takes no pleasure in seeing her image in the glass. I am about, therefore, to retrace all the events of my life, in order to judge myself impartially, as perhaps posterity will judge me, laughing at my peccadilloes, which have not prevented me from becoming a Cardinal, and rendering justice to the talent which has carried me to the ministry, in which I have maintained myself for some time past, against all winds and tides. I am writing my memoirs, in the first place for myself; but I allow my heirs to publish them, if they are not afraid of my posthumous frankness; for I mean to tell everything, be it good or bad, even though I should put my flatterers to the blush for their panegyrics, and sometimes give the victory to my detractors; but if, as I hope, I shall be able to give the lie, more than once, to both parties, I shall reap my compensation.

I was born at Brives-la-Gaillarde on the 6th of September 1656, the *legitimate* son of Jean Dubois and Marie Dujoyet. As I owe it to no one save myself that I have become what I am, I have not had the vanity to create myself a genealogy. My ancestors, whoever they may be, will pardon me for knowing but my father simply; many a marquis cannot say as much.

My father, of Bearnais origin, was an apothecary by trade. During his two years of marriage he had seemed to wait with patience till Heaven should send him an offspring. His wife was in greater haste, and the talk of the town attributed the accomplishment of her wishes to chance. I should not know how to authenticate this anecdote; but I will repeat it, in order to show a proof of my impartial frankness, even at the expense of the authors of my being. An aged bachelor of Brives wedded a young lady of sixteen, doubtless having an eye to the old proverb of the "old cock and the young pullet." On the eve of his marriage he assembled the wiseacres of the faculty in the town to hold a council on his scanty capacity. Opinions differed: according to some, nature herself had admirable resources at every age; according to others, a certain drug, duly prescribed, would serve the sexagenarian bridegroom in lieu of youth. The latter, without hesitation, chose of the two chances of success what seemed the surest and promptest. The prescription was sent to the pharmacy of my worthy father. M. Jean Dubois set to work at once, and composed a potion which would resuscitate a corpse. This precious philtre had not to be delivered until the following day; it was growing late, and my mother was urging her spouse to come to bed. He, whose fatigue gave him a like advice, undressed, blew out his candle and lay down maritally; but in the middle of the night he awoke complaining of a parching thirst. His better half, disturbed in her slumber, rose in haste, and groped at random for something to assuage this inopportune thirst; her hand lighted upon the blessed potion: it was indeed a specific. Nine months later I arrived to attest to its virtues and become doubly the pride of my father.

My enemies have excited scandal by spreading abroad the rumour that I had not received baptism. I should be embarrassed to prove by authentic documents that I have been laved from the original blot. I still feel within me all the vicious tendencies of a true son of Adam; but to deny my baptism is, after all, only an epigram against the infallibility of the Pope who made me a Cardinal. In any case it is too late now to repair the omission. I know not why my poor mother, so pious in other respects, should have exposed me to a reproach through which I am tempted to blush for her. I have heard say, amongst other

versions, that it was intended I should be baptised on the same day as one of my cousins, who had made his entry into this world at almost the same hour with me, and that by some inconceivable error my cousin received the sacrament twice, the one destined for me being included. It was on the 24th of September, so they say, that the Church made this mistake to my disadvantage. None the less, in the register of events my name occurred; but, the double function having been discovered later, the page which certified my baptism was torn out for the honour of the parish. This story is a fable invented to give the court a laugh; and I myself was the first to laugh at it. The Marquise de La Ferté said to me one day, with those eyes which make her libertine of a husband inexcusable:

"M. l'Abbé, is it true that you are not baptised?"

"I do not know, madame," I answered; "in any case I have no lack of names."

The Duc d'Orléans had a moment before given me one of his most energetic ones.

My childhood had necessarily to be largely concerned with the apothecary's shop, and I will pass over details which would only be interesting to professors of the art. At the age of six I was sent to school, where, during two years, I learned to read passably, to write badly, and above all to submit to chastisement. I will pass over in silence the colics with which I gratified masters and pupils, by putting a dose of antimony in the soup-kettle. This playful trick, which might have led to dire results, only ended in my being sent back to the paternal roof sooner than I had hoped for. My father was angry at first, then grew calm again, as is the way of fathers the world over; and he even was pleased to show me the first principles of the profession. He wished, he said, to make me the most skilful apothecary in France, or at least in Limousin. He taught me the names and nature of the drugs; but I preferred to waste my time in playing in the street with scamps who thrashed me and stole my money. The rapid progress I made in these fine studies may be conceived. My father, displeased at my idleness, was sometimes brutal with his lessons; he was at once the father and the irritated apothecary. My tricks were capable of compromising the health of a whole town. When I happened to have committed some mistake or negligence in the preparation

of a prescription, I required, in order to return to favour, the intercession of my mother, who preferred me to a brother whom I had preceded in this world by a few years. A piece of mischief which I cannot recall without laughing exiled me anew from the paternal roof.

Opposite the shop lived Madame de Chatelude, a young and pretty widow, whose view had acted on my precocious twelve years in the manner of the potion to which, according to the chronicles of the place, I owed my existence. The ne'er-dowells whom I frequented had prepared my education; it was for myself to do the rest. The figure and divine contours of Madame de Chatelude inflamed my imagination, particularly when I contemplated her at her window. With the curiosity natural to a young rogue of my age, I envied my father's lot, who was required from time to time to exercise the most delicate functions of his ministry upon this lady; and I asked myself aside, if, during the time of the operation, he kept his eyes shut or open. One evening, when my father had gone to blood a patient, Madame de Chatelude's waiting-maid came with a message which commanded the instant attendance of the apothecary with his arms and baggage. I immediately conceived the project of replacing my father. The instrument, charged according to the prescription, was done up in my white apron, and I repaired with pride to the patient. I was engrossed with the importance of my powers, and felt taller by two feet. "What do you want, my little man?" said the duenna who introduced me.

"Madame," I answered politely, "I come on behalf of M. Jean Dubois; my father is not at home, and I fear will not return till late; that is why I have come in his place. . . ."

With these words, I raised the metal tube with the most significant gesture.

The old woman understood my intention. "Holy Virgin," she cried, "do we stand in need of a child?"

"Child!" I cried; "do you think one needs to be six feet high to reach what the apothecary looks at?"

My sally was unsuccessful. "Come along, piece of impudence," said the chamber-maid, "give it to me."

"Never!" I interrupted her; "this is my affair, and you shall not show me such an insult."

Then came the quarrel. I resisted stoutly; she redoubled

her efforts. I saw that the nozzle of the syringe was directed towards the duenna's face; and the spray of water which I turned on it, with well-directed aim, put an end to the combat. My misfortune had it that, at the cries of my female adversary, the door opened, and the vast perruque of the doctor who appeared received its share of the deluge. I took to flight, in spite of my victory; and my father proved to me next day that all is not profit in the life of an apothecary.

This adventure, however, attested to most excellent dispositions; and I know not why my father, instead of auguring from it that I was born to follow in his footsteps, deprived himself once more of the aid of my youthful talent, and sent me to the Jesuit College, where I was recommended by a M. Lefebure. It is true that this recommendation went so far as to include the price of the *pension*.

CHAPTER II

DUBOIS WITH THE JESUITS—HE DOES NOT COMMUNICATE—THE
CARNIVAL—DUBOIS SCARAMOUCHE—DUBOIS TONSURED—HE
LEAVES BRIVES-LA-GAILLARDE — PORTRAIT OF DUBOIS—
M. DE GOURGUES, PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
BORDEAUX—DUBOIS PRECEPTOR—MADEMOISELLE PIERRETTE
—DUBOIS MARRIED—DELIVERANCE OF PIERRETTE—THE
SECOND FATHER—DEPARTURE FOR PARIS

AT college, where I remained four years, I acquired the few vices which I still lacked. In revenge, I learned a few scraps of Latin, which the good Jesuit fathers engraved on my memory by means of the birch-rod. I proved to them, at the time of the Contract, that I was not ungrateful.

In spite of my indolence and bad examples, it was to my own quickness that I owed the instruction I derived from books. Thus I made little of the "Greek roots" of Port-Royal, and I studied history with an aptitude beyond my years. The *Prince* of Machiavelli, translated by Amelot de la Houssaie, pleased me mightily, and I am sure that I derived from it excellent principles of policy. The Jesuits know admirably how to recruit proselytes for their order, all the members of which are distinguished for their knowledge or ability. It seems that I possessed the qualities out of which a good Jesuit is made, for they spared neither exhortations nor stratagems to enlist me in the company. I held out stoutly, and I applauded myself for not having yielded to their seductions, which would have, perhaps, made me nothing more than a college rector. 'Tis a goodly post, however, that of Confessor to the King! If the Père La Chaise had possessed any merits beyond his long nose, Heaven knows what would have become of us. However, I made rapid progress also in the vices of a student, and I lied with an imperturbable assurance. I did not know what shame was, and at the time of my first communion I absented myself from the Holy Table in order to rob the cupboard of the reverend fathers; although this did

CHAPTER II

not hinder me from stoutly maintaining that I had received my Creator. On this account the malicious have treated me as a pagan, doubtless out of Christian charity. One talent upon which I was able, even at that time, to plume myself, was that of reading aloud with rare perfection. I was even appointed reader to the refectory, and I had the time to perfect myself in this rare and difficult art, to which I owe something of my present greatness.

The Carnival of 1669 I obtained permission to pass with my father. M. Lefebure, whom I visited and thanked for his bounties, supplied me amply with money, and recommended me to be as well behaved as possible. I was careful to promise him this; but there is no folly I did not commit during that pleasant time of masquerade! My honoured father, seeing how great a lad I had grown, almost regretted that he had not made an apothecary of me; but my brother, who was growing in knowledge as I was in perversity, consoled him, promising him a worthy inheritor of his syringe and rights of citizenship. In truth, this dear brother became afterwards privileged apothecary of the Reformed Franciscans of Brives, until I summoned him to me, and created him Superintendent of Roads and Bridges. I may have sometimes repudiated foolish relations; but I have never blushed for my birth. Many great men are not as good as I in this respect. I return to my Carnival. I procured myself a Scaramouch costume, which mightily became my lively appearance and the vivacity of my remarks. In this costume I frequented the balls and dances. The mask saved me from recognition, and I was all the more audacious on this account. For the rest, the pupil of the Jesuits was entirely unrecognisable; I indulged in women and girls! All over Brives nobody was talked of but the charming Scaramouch, and my first conquest only served to inflate my reputation. I had conceived the idea of being carried to the *fêtes* whither I was invited, in a barrow, and suddenly I sprang into the midst of the assembly with capers and tumbling which won everybody's applause. Luckily my follies did not displease M. Lefebure; but he concluded that I was already too ripe for college, and at the end of the year, having seen me tonsured, he declared that I was in a position to teach others. One of his friends at Bordeaux required a tutor: I set off for that city in order to apply for the post. I left the College and Brives-la-

CHAPTER II

DUBOIS WITH THE JESUITS—HE DOES NOT COMMUNICATE—THE
CARNIVAL—DUBOIS SCARAMOUCHE—DUBOIS TONSURED—HE
LEAVES BRIVES-LA-GAILLARDE — PORTRAIT OF DUBOIS—
M. DE GOURGUES, PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
BORDEAUX—DUBOIS PRECEPTOR—MADEMOISELLE PIERRETTE
— DUBOIS MARRIED — DELIVERANCE OF PIERRETTE — THE
SECOND FATHER—DEPARTURE FOR PARIS

AT college, where I remained four years, I acquired the few vices which I still lacked. In revenge, I learned a few scraps of Latin, which the good Jesuit fathers engraved on my memory by means of the birch-rod. I proved to them, at the time of the Contract, that I was not ungrateful.

In spite of my indolence and bad examples, it was to my own quickness that I owed the instruction I derived from books. Thus I made little of the "Greek roots" of Port-Royal, and I studied history with an aptitude beyond my years. The *Prince* of Machiavelli, translated by Amelot de la Houssaie, pleased me mightily, and I am sure that I derived from it excellent principles of policy. The Jesuits know admirably how to recruit proselytes for their order, all the members of which are distinguished for their knowledge or ability. It seems that I possessed the qualities out of which a good Jesuit is made, for they spared neither exhortations nor stratagems to enlist me in the company. I held out stoutly, and I applaud myself for not having yielded to their seductions, which would have, perhaps, made me nothing more than a college rector. 'Tis a goodly post, however, that of Confessor to the King! If the Père La Chaise had possessed any merits beyond his long nose, Heaven knows what would have become of us. However, I made rapid progress also in the vices of a student, and I lied with an imperturbable assurance. I did not know what shame was, and at the time of my first communion I absented myself from the Holy Table in order to rob the cupboard of the reverend fathers; although this did

CHAPTER II

not hinder me from stoutly maintaining that I had received my Creator. On this account the malicious have treated me as a pagan, doubtless out of Christian charity. One talent upon which I was able, even at that time, to plume myself, was that of reading aloud with rare perfection. I was even appointed reader to the refectory, and I had the time to perfect myself in this rare and difficult art, to which I owe something of my present greatness.

The Carnival of 1669 I obtained permission to pass with my father. M. Lefebure, whom I visited and thanked for his bounties, supplied me amply with money, and recommended me to be as well behaved as possible. I was careful to promise him this; but there is no folly I did not commit during that pleasant time of masquerade! My honoured father, seeing how great a lad I had grown, almost regretted that he had not made an apothecary of me; but my brother, who was growing in knowledge as I was in perversity, consoled him, promising him a worthy inheritor of his syringe and rights of citizenship. In truth, this dear brother became afterwards privileged apothecary of the Reformed Franciscans of Brives, until I summoned him to me, and created him Superintendent of Roads and Bridges. I may have sometimes repudiated foolish relations; but I have never blushed for my birth. Many great men are not as good as I in this respect. I return to my Carnival. I procured myself a Scaramouch costume, which mightily became my lively appearance and the vivacity of my remarks. In this costume I frequented the balls and dances. The mask saved me from recognition, and I was all the more audacious on this account. For the rest, the pupil of the Jesuits was entirely unrecognisable; I indulged in women and girls! All over Brives nobody was talked of but the charming Scaramouch, and my first conquest only served to inflate my reputation. I had conceived the idea of being carried to the *fêtes* whither I was invited, in a barrow, and suddenly I sprang into the midst of the assembly with capers and tumbling which won everybody's applause. Luckily my follies did not displease M. Lefebure; but he concluded that I was already too ripe for college, and at the end of the year, having seen me tonsured, he declared that I was in a position to teach others. One of his friends at Bordeaux required a tutor: I set off for that city in order to apply for the post. I left the College and Brives-la-

Gaillarde, having first said farewell to my worthy father, whom I was to see no more, to my mother, who exhorted me to tell my rosary regularly, and my younger brother, who could already distinguish cassia from senna. M. Lefebure always did things in order; he gave me with his letter of recommendation a well-lined purse. I was only fifteen years old, and I seemed to be twenty; moreover, I fulfilled all the conditions of such a travesty: my broad shoulders were not deceptive, and I had the wherewithal to cut a figure in the world, strongly marked features, yet pleasant withal, hazel eyes, fine hair and hands. Whether it was from my confidence in these external advantages, or from my greater confidence in others, which one does not always display, I arrived in Bordeaux as joyously as though I had just received a legacy.

At the risk of letting the place I was about to solicit be obtained by another, I resolved to take advantage of my incognito and see the town a little; but my purse grew visibly thinner, and at the end of four days I was obliged to put the rein on my curiosity. Having put on a clean collar and changed my linen, I repaired to the Président de Gourgues with more assurance than is usual with a place-seeker. My cassock opened every door to me, and I was allowed to present M. Lefebure's letter into the President's own hands. The severe gaze with which he honoured me, when I entered his office, would have disconcerted one less hardy than I was; but I was not even confused at the aspect of so austere a magistrate. The first words he addressed to me were an encouragement which I did not need.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," he said, "pray be seated."

Whilst he was reading the letter of introduction he scrutinised me from out the corner of his eye, and I returned the compliment. He was a big man, dry in appearance, though not in spirit, as I came to know later; his leanness had something venerable about it, and under the crown of his perruque his eyes were as severe as if he had been on the bench; his gestures had something noble in their slowness, but his short, brusque manner of speech announced his frankness and business capacity.

"Monsieur," he said to me, "it is enough that M. Lefebure has sent you here to ensure you my confidence at once; your services are all the more acceptable to me, since my son's tutor has not waited for you, but withdrew yesterday; I beg you then to replace him at once."

"Monsieur le Président," I answered impudently, "I hope to deserve the honour you do me; I have already completed several educations."

"What," replied M. de Gourgues, "M. Lefebure tells me that you have just left the College of Brives!"

"It is true," I answered without hesitating; "and it was at the College that I conducted those educations, which, moreover, brought me more glory than cash."

I was lucky thus to extricate myself from my first falsehood to M. le Président, but I promised to do still better in future. Meanwhile, I was installed, after an agreement had been come to as to my wages, which were to be at the rate of three hundred crowns a year, with my board and lodging. I felt no joy at them, and would fain have a year's salary in advance with the same persons who had so well assisted me to squander the little I possessed. But in my new position, morality formed an indispensable part of the qualities I was warranted to possess; and even though M. de Gourgues kept an actress or two, it was forbidden me to cast a hand, hardly an eye even, on what is called, often so improperly, the fair sex. To pass a night away from the hotel would have meant dismissal; and for a form of recreation I was to take my pupil for a walk round the port; even the duration of our walks abroad was fixed by Madame de Gourgues. I was tempted to turn my attention to this lady, for lack of anything better. I was not alarmed by her thirty-five years; it was of her dignity that I was afraid. I was not vain enough to believe that a little tutor could triumph over the virtue of a Présidente. But the devil is very cunning, woman is very frail, and in affairs of gallantry only the first step is hard.

I have learned since that Madame's tall lackey had been in front of me: I had not, then, to regret a participation. I know not if her son had a more plebeian origin than his father suspected; but the envelope of his mind was so crass, that nothing could penetrate it. I regretted at first, that I should have to teach a brute of this sort, and my Latin—the little I had—was wasted on him. But, as I have said, I was soon consoled: I made better use of my time by studying myself, as a compensation for the slothful ignorance of my pupil, and especially by throwing myself head over ears into a vulgar amour. Madame de Gourgues hated me to the death for it. I dined in the pantry with the

servants, without looking upon it as a dishonour; my self-esteem had its revenge for what was humiliating in the situation: my predecessor had not been any more lordly, and I should have shown an ill grace in wishing for more distinction than M. de Gourgues accorded me. Besides, had I the benefit of a choice? I got on well with my fellow-guests; they treated me with a deference which was offered less to my cloth than my person, and I condescended to elevate to myself a pretty maid, who had caused more than one gallant of the robe or the sword to descend to her: she was a king's morsel.

Mademoiselle Pierrette, who never could abide vulgarity, as she said often at table, repulsed the homage of Lafleur and Labrie; she let herself yield to mine. In truth, she was a woman of too much experience in such dalliance not to dread the results of a complaisance; and I am prone to believe that I was the cause of an inadvertence which produced its fruit after the customary nine months. Pierrette lost flesh by dint of weeping, and her waist grew big in proportion. Two councillors of the Court, a merchant, and three abbés were pointed out, in a whisper, as guilty of the indiscretion. My accursed pupil, sottish as he was by nature, had wit enough, withal, to throw light on my paternity. The little villain ought to be an investigating magistrate some day.

"Mamma," said this urchin, "I think Pierrette is almost as ill as M. d'Ardenne."

This worthy M. d'Ardenne, who was the cause of this vexatious allusion, was a poor dropsical clerk who had to be tapped periodically, every month.

M. and Madame de Gourgues compared their mutual observations.

"Undoubtedly," said Madame de Gourgues, "I should lay myself open to ridicule if I kept this girl in my service."

"You are harder to please than M. l'Abbé Dubois," answered the child, "and I very much doubt if he will be suited so well by another."

These words excited suspicion against me, which my pupil hastened to elucidate. He told naively how of nights I visited the soubrette's chamber without a light or a mantle. It was assuredly not in order to read there. It needed no more to bring my iniquity to light. The Présidente wished to turn me

out-of-doors; the Président changed colour; but, an enemy to scandal, he imagined a more moral if more costly expedient.

On the following day I was summoned to his office, where I repaired more speedily than I should have done if the true reason of this summons had been known to me. M. de Gourgues did not ask me to take a seat, and entered promptly on the subject.

"Dubois, you have got a child. . . ."

"Monsieur le Président," I interrupted, determined to deny everything, "do not make fun of a poor young man who is so obliged to you."

"My lad," he said, "the wisest course for you is to confess, without prevarications, which would be useless this time. The proofs are too patent, and Pierrette is not the only guilty one."

"No more am I," I answered, not thinking to be so near the truth.

"Listen to me, Dubois; reproaches would be useless here, advice would be more to the purpose. You understand that after what has passed you cannot hope to remain in my house; the example would be unprofitable to my son."

"Faith! it would be desirable if a like thing befell him; his intelligence would gain by it. . . ."

"In any case," he continued, with a smile, "that is not amongst your functions as a tutor. But choose, if you please, between leaving by yourself, or with a wife."

"Sooner with the devil, Monsieur le Président."

"You are hard to please, Monsieur l'Abbé, when I consent to furnish the dowry. . . ."

"If you please?"

"A thousand crowns would assure your future; your industry and that of Pierrette would suffice to procure you a competence, which I sincerely wish you."

"Monsieur le Président, at your service; I will wed the thousand crowns."

The scene grew pathetic when Pierrette, all in tears, flung herself into my arms, calling me her dear husband. All the family made a point of congratulating me. The contract was drawn up, and a marriage, in all due form, left me no leisure for reflection. M. de Gourgues counted out the dowry to me, which my eyes devoured, as though it had been a perfect fortune;

servants, without looking upon it as a dishonour; my self-esteem had its revenge for what was humiliating in the situation: my predecessor had not been any more lordly, and I should have shown an ill grace in wishing for more distinction than M. de Gourgues accorded me. Besides, had I the benefit of a choice? I got on well with my fellow-guests; they treated me with a deference which was offered less to my cloth than my person, and I condescended to elevate to myself a pretty maid, who had caused more than one gallant of the robe or the sword to descend to her: she was a king's morsel.

Mademoiselle Pierrette, who never could abide vulgarity, as she said often at table, repulsed the homage of Lafleur and Labrie; she let herself yield to mine. In truth, she was a woman of too much experience in such dalliance not to dread the results of a complaisance; and I am prone to believe that I was the cause of an inadvertence which produced its fruit after the customary nine months. Pierrette lost flesh by dint of weeping, and her waist grew big in proportion. Two councillors of the Court, a merchant, and three abbés were pointed out, in a whisper, as guilty of the indiscretion. My accursed pupil, sottish as he was by nature, had wit enough, withal, to throw light on my paternity. The little villain ought to be an investigating magistrate some day.

"Mamma," said this urchin, "I think Pierrette is almost as ill as M. d'Ardennes."

This worthy M. d'Ardennes, who was the cause of this vexatious allusion, was a poor dropsical clerk who had to be tapped periodically, every month.

M. and Madame de Gourgues compared their mutual observations.

"Undoubtedly," said Madame de Gourgues, "I should lay myself open to ridicule if I kept this girl in my service."

"You are harder to please than M. l'Abbé Dubois," answered the child, "and I very much doubt if he will be suited so well by another."

These words excited suspicion against me, which my pupil hastened to elucidate. He told naively how of nights I visited the soubrette's chamber without a light or a mantle. It was assuredly not in order to read there. It needed no more to bring my iniquity to light. The Présidente wished to turn me

out-of-doors; the Président changed colour; but, an enemy to scandal, he imagined a more moral if more costly expedient.

On the following day I was summoned to his office, where I repaired more speedily than I should have done if the true reason of this summons had been known to me. M. de Gourgues did not ask me to take a seat, and entered promptly on the subject.

"Dubois, you have got a child. . . ."

"Monsieur le Président," I interrupted, determined to deny everything, "do not make fun of a poor young man who is so obliged to you."

"My lad," he said, "the wisest course for you is to confess, without prevarications, which would be useless this time. The proofs are too patent, and Pierrette is not the only guilty one."

"No more am I," I answered, not thinking to be so near the truth.

"Listen to me, Dubois; reproaches would be useless here, advice would be more to the purpose. You understand that after what has passed you cannot hope to remain in my house; the example would be unprofitable to my son."

"Faith! it would be desirable if a like thing befell him; his intelligence would gain by it. . . ."

"In any case," he continued, with a smile, "that is not amongst your functions as a tutor. But choose, if you please, between leaving by yourself, or with a wife."

"Sooner with the devil, Monsieur le Président."

"You are hard to please, Monsieur l'Abbé, when I consent to furnish the dowry. . . ."

"If you please?"

"A thousand crowns would assure your future; your industry and that of Pierrette would suffice to procure you a competence, which I sincerely wish you."

"Monsieur le Président, at your service; I will wed the thousand crowns."

The scene grew pathetic when Pierrette, all in tears, flung herself into my arms, calling me her dear husband. All the family made a point of congratulating me. The contract was drawn up, and a marriage, in all due form, left me no leisure for reflection. M. de Gourgues counted out the dowry to me, which my eyes devoured, as though it had been a perfect fortune;

he recommended me prudence, industry, economy; and his sermon was barely finished when I hastened to make a hole in this good money which had cost me so little to earn. I left my wife for other women, who were not worth her; she had no more scruples towards myself, and the crowns departed on one side to return on the other. However, we were as good friends as ever.

It was not long after the wedding when Pierrette was delivered, and I found myself the father of a fine child, whose presence attracted a host of presents to the house. It needs not telling that I had thrown my stock to the winds; finding myself in funds, I bade farewell to the condition of tutor, and spent a joyous life betwixt women, wine, and gaming. A good slice of the dowry had already changed hands.

M. le Président summoned me again to him, and said to me with his eternal gravity: "Dubois, if you continue to keep on this fine course I shall expect to see you, within three months, in the hospital."

"Monsieur," I answered insolently, "have you another girl to marry me to? That pays well."

"No; but I wish to rescue an unfortunate man; I have resolved to adopt your son and bring him up as though he were my own."

"So be it, M. le Président, you have my permission to believe it, and I am convinced the dear child will as lief have you for his father as anyone else."

"As for you, Dubois, you have supple wits which should bring you success; I exhort you to repair to Paris with your wife."

"So be it—with my wife."

"In that capital occasions to make your fortune will not be lacking; I have confidence in your cleverness. See, this purse contains eight hundred livres for your travelling expenses; your places have been taken in the public conveyance."

I could see plainly that M. de Gourgues was mightily relieved at my departure and that of Pierrette, whom I found to be informed of everything. Her careless character raised no obstacle to so sudden a departure; it seems that the relations existing between my wife and the Président rendered it indispensable. I resigned myself, and when the babe had been put out to nurse by its second father, M. de Gourgues, Pierrette and myself entered the carriage with all that satisfaction which we

experience in visiting new scenes when no bond of sentiment or interest attaches us to those we are leaving. I will even say to my honour that I did not encroach on the sum which I had obtained from the generosity of my son's father at Bordeaux. I promised myself to spend largely at Paris, where we arrived after being a fortnight on the road. I do not remember precisely whither I went to repose me of my fatigue.

CHAPTER III

THE THORNS OF PARIS—THE ABBÉ BODEAU—DUBOIS AND HIS WIFE SEPARATE — DUBOIS TUTOR TO M. TROTIER DE RIANCÉ—THE COLLEGE OF SAINT-MICHEL—M. FAURE—THE SCHOLARS—DAME FRANÇOISE AND HENRI BOIVIN—THE EVENING STROLLS—DUBOIS TUTOR TO YOUNG MAROY—M. PLUVANT, MASTER OF THE WARDROBE TO MONSIEUR—M. LE DUC DE VENDÔME—THE STOOL: THE BISHOP OF PARMA AND ALBERONI—DUBOIS IN FAVOUR

AH! how fair Paris seemed to me as long as the dowry of Pierrette lasted. There was no place where I did not find roses to gather in that Paradise of the rich; but, on a sudden, I perceived that there were also thorns; and, unfortunately, the two important things, money and health, failed me at the same moment. I thought then of remembering my wife, whom I had left a widow for two nights out of three; and what would have calmed my marital remorse, if I had had any, was to find her perfectly consoled for my continual absences. On the day after my indisposition, a personage appeared whose name and face were unknown to me: he has since assured me that he had met me elsewhere; I do not contradict him. The Abbé Bodeau (such was his designation in the Court, the town, and everywhere else) bore the title of Canon, and was by trade purveyor of the little establishments of great noblemen. My wife gave me the details of his attributes: as for the man himself, short and fat, prompt to business, gay and smiling ever, he resembled every canon the world over. He knew me, if he had never seen me, for he burst out laughing at sight of my pan of gruel. His merriment was contagious, and I followed his example. The friendly relations which I maintained for several months with this honest huckster favoured those of my wife with the Abbé's clients. I grew quickly accustomed to this idle life, where fortune came to me without my ever taking thought to thank Heaven or my wife: we had nothing to reproach each other on either side, except it

CHAPTER III

were that I did not live on my savings. The worthy Marquis de Louvois, amongst others, was an ample revenue, and I loved him as a father. Madame Dubois did very wrong in not caring for him; 'tis a grievance I have never pardoned her. I suspected the dear Abbé of having woven the whole intrigue, which seemed to me successful beyond my hopes. What a service he rendered me in disembarassing me of my wife. Owing to his interested counsels the lusty Louvois had his dismissal, and I had mine.

"My dear," said my wife to me one day, "what course do you intend to take?"

"The best, probably," I answered, "if I have not taken it already."

"Then I shall speak without reserve, and you be pleased to consider now, at any rate, that it is the legitimate wife as well as the true friend who is speaking."

"I have never been such a fop as to consider you as aught else."

"Listen to me, then; I repent, from the bottom of my soul, that I ever made you abandon your cloth and profession of tutor. M. l' Abbé Bodeau thinks that you have mistaken your vocation."

"Is it a monk you would have me be? Well, that might be, if you became a nun!"

"Who knows what I might be, if such were your good pleasure."

"Faith, one would imagine you had asked my advice on everything! I thought we had agreed that we should both go our own way, as each preferred it."

"I desire nothing better; my hand on the bargain! That is why I inform you that from to-morrow you can put your industry to account."

"And what of yours?"

"'Tis no longer adequate to supply you with pocket-money, and I am ashamed of pandering to your bad habits. Adieu! We part as friends."

"Think twice of it; perhaps, when I have become a Cardinal or Prime Minister, you will be sorry for having turned me out of doors."

"You see, you admit you were not made for marriage. Monseigneur, you will not forget me amongst all your honours."

"Only try and preserve your eighteen years until then; you may find a place in my household."

"In the meantime, Monseigneur, mine is no longer open to you."

"It is a long time since it has been open to everybody."

"Remember yourself, Sir; I am no longer your better half."

"No less, no more than before. Good luck, my fair one. When you have children and a fortune, I shall be proud to be their tutor."

Showing no regret at this amicable separation, I embraced my wife most respectfully, with a thousand good wishes for her happiness. The Abbé Bodeau, who was awaiting me at the gate with a beaming countenance, consoled me charitably, and promised me his protection. I left my establishment, carrying but a lean bundle with me; and clothed already in the professional attire, I went to show myself in this costume to certain ladies who gave me asylum until such time as I should have ferretted out a situation. One of these ladies was good enough to interest herself in me; and at her introduction, M. Trotier de Riancé, of the Chamber of Finance, accepted me as tutor to his son. On this occasion I was at the pains to give the lie to the curious recommendation which had done me more service perhaps than one more reputable. It was the only education of which I may be allowed to boast before God and men. My pupil would have done honour to a Port-Royal Jansenist. I remained no less than two years in this house, leading an exemplary life as far as words were concerned, to the parents' edification. The young man who had been confided to my care, of a shy and gentle nature, obeyed my moral lessons so well that the father was obliged to begin to moderate my zealous ardour. The mother spoke of me always as "the Holy Man"; and my hypocrisy amused me as a comedy in which I won applause as author and actor as well, not to mention the receipts, which buoyed up my courage. However, I had not renounced my old affections; and as my conduct was in no wise under supervision, I went to church by no means so often as I gave out. This lasted until my pupil's father happened upon me in mighty bad company, whither he had not come, apparently, in search of me. He said nothing of his thought; but shortly afterwards, on the pretext that I had nothing more to teach his son, dismissed me with a rich present. We parted good friends, tacitly promising each other secrecy as to the nature of our common acquaintances.

Madame de Riancé, an old and pious coquette, bade me adieu with tears, in a manner liable to give me a false impression of her.

She it was who placed me with the Président de Gourgues, a brother of the Président of Bordeaux, to whom my wife, my son, and myself all owed so much. This Président had the vices of the family: a joyous libertine and no Tartuffe, he did not make himself out better than he really was; and from the moment that he discovered me I became his confidant and accomplice. My company pleased him also, and he found it indispensable on his gallant expeditions. He robbed his son of my lessons; and the language which I employed with him proves that Latin is not the only one which outrages modesty by its words. Oaths were no more than accessory ornaments which I have ever since retained. Fifteen years of widowhood was M. de Gourgues' excuse for his dissipated conduct, and my gentlemen of the Parliament were Catos of his own kidney. I was no better off with my pupil than in my previous experiences. I wasted my time and trouble in teaching a little unlicked cub. The Président consoled me for the tedium of this employment; and he would have been the most amiable of men if his joyous philosophy had known how to preserve itself from the influence of prejudice. I thought it useless to enter with him into the details of my private life; and his discretion on this matter caused me to suspect that he knew more of the subject than I should have wished to tell him. I was mistaken. M. de Gourgues, writing to his brother at Bordeaux, was tactless enough to speak of me, and the reply which he received brought an interruption to our friendship: he dreaded ridicule and scandal, and with incredible weakness determined no longer to have me in his house. I will wager that he has often regretted this. He called me one day into the garden and showed me the letter, in which there was a full chronicle of my achievements and marriage, with only certain reticences regarding the birth of my son.

"Well! What have you to reply to that, my boy?" said the Président.

"Anything I choose—begging your pardon," said I.

"You understand that I am no more likely to believe it; but—in short, you are married, and you wear a stock. . . ."

"Ah! Monsieur, that proves to you that I have become once

more what I was before I took a wife: mine is dead, thank God!"

M. de Gourgues sighed at these words in a manner which gave me to understand that he viewed widowhood in no darker colours than myself.

Unluckily, such is the result of prejudices, that from that moment my credit was gone with him. To keep me was, in his eyes, to become a participator in the bad reputation given to me by his beloved brother. Meanwhile, he wrote again to the latter, who sent him back such highly-coloured portraits of me, the whole commentated on by his wife, that M. de Gourgues had no resource but to beg me, much against his heart, to seek a house where my prowess was unknown. I was afraid the accursed Président would put a seal on his persecutions by forwarding me my son, whom I had so disinterestedly given him; but he looked upon him as his own property. M. de Gourgues did not let me go with empty hands, and urged me to come and visit him as a friend. I did not fail him, and many a fine gathering I remember in his house at Aunay. I must confess that my pupil changed subsequently to his advantage; and, as though his father had been his teacher, became a free liver and, almost, a man of wit. Finding myself without a place and with a certain amount of money, I conceived the fantasy of completing my education, which had always remained imperfect. I felt an ambition to instruct myself, which was similar to that of advancing on the career of fortune. In my pretty zeal, I stooped in order to be more sure of rising. I entered the College of Saint-Michel or Pompadour; and M. Faure, Doctor of the Sorbonne, the Principal of this College, who had been tutor of M. Letellier, Archbishop of Rheims, took me into his private service. I attached myself not so much to the man as to the place, and laboured rather for the future than the present. M. Faure was a real Sorbonnian doctor, but of a choleric temper. I, who had never known what gentleness and patience meant, was firm in my replies with voice and gesture; whence interminable discussions which did not proceed by *ergo* and *utrum*; the Sorbonne lost its rights, and each of us swore by God and Devil. Meantime, my finances were at the ebb; I did not refuse a purse which was vacant at the college. The secretary became the scholar, and thenceforth I consorted no more with the Principal. My irascible humour

vented itself on my comrades. It was necessary to renounce the indolent habits contracted by me in my apprenticeship as a tutor. I made such progress as my pupils had never done beneath my rod: rising early and going to rest late, poring over Greek and Latin, I bore it all with devotion. Now I have cause to be proud; for behold me, in short, the son of my works. I saw but rarely the rubicund countenance of M. Faure. I had tumbled into the midst of the purse-holders, a crass and prejudiced set. Their idleness, ignorance, and pride excited my pity, and I struck up a friendship, in preference, with our cook, old Françoise, and Henri Boivin, our porter, the natural brother of the scientist, Jean Boivin, who is still alive. Dame Françoise, a beauty of fifty, of a plumpness which was an excellent imitation of freshness, was still a dainty enough morsel for famished schoolboys, but resisted the gallants with more perseverance than I had thought her capable of; and the porter alone shared with me the good lady's favours. As we all dined together, the purse-holders, turn by turn, did the honours of this male seraglio. Françoise only threw the handkerchief to her two faithful adorers, who, at table, had always the best and biggest pieces. We excited much envy, and Boivin, a tailor by trade, saw the number of his enemies increase, and that of his customers diminish. He was a good rogue of a tailor, and I have not forgotten him in my prosperity: he still wears my livery, and I sometimes visit the shop which he has established in the Rue Saint Honoré.

Thus we lived like brothers and sisters, Henri, Françoise, and I; all things were in common between us; and a purse-holder having tried to violate our Hélène, I brought the strength of my twenty-two years to bear on him. We fought like two knights of the Round Table, in presence of the purse-holders, who adjudged me victor. Françoise loved me all the more for it.

It was at this school that I acquired those excellent economical principles which have meant an income of two hundred thousand livres, and which have been often treated as avarice. For the rest, the name has nothing to do with the matter; I have always found it answer. I do not blush now to admit that I have cleaned my boots with my own spittle; I have reason then to be indignant when my nephews are prodigal and fling money out of the window. My nephews will never make the career that I have made.

Life at college has but meagre distractions, and I thought, not without regret, of the pleasures I had tasted, in a manner so piquant too. On fine summer evenings Henri took one of Françoise's arms, I accommodated myself with the other, and we made our promenade along the Quai de la Tournelle to the corner of the Ile Saint-Louis. This recreation was prolonged until sunset.

M. de Gourgues, astonished at my silence, wrote to me, urging me to spend three days at his house at Aunay, promising me good cheer and a good bed. I understood that it was a question of my being unfaithful to Dame Françoise, and I repaired to the principal.

"Well, scapegrace," he cried to me, when I entered, "I have heard about the pretty life you lead . . ."

"Monsieur," I answered, without giving him time to finish, "give me, if you please, a permission of three days to visit M. le Président de Gourgues."

"Go to the devil, if he will have you."

"I shall be careful not to ask him; he might take me at my word."

"Don't be afraid, it's all arranged. I don't want to know where you are going; those three days will lay more than three mortal sins on your conscience."

"You are very courteous; I am your humble servant."

"I know that, rascal; you could not say a truer word."

At these words I turned round, a flush on my forehead, rage in my heart.

"You make a mistake, M. Faure," I said, emphasising each word; "and to give you a proof of it, I shall give myself, on my own authority, a permission of more than three days."

"For ever, if it suits you."

"The devil take me! You can have back your purse of a hundred and twenty livres; I will never set foot again in your antechamber, and I wish you plenty more servants like me."

"That I do not, I swear to you; I am glad to be rid of such a pedant as yourself."

"And I of such a pedant as you."

I went to pack my baggage, which was no heavier than when I entered Saint-Michel: I embraced Henri and Françoise with tears in my eyes, and turned out of the Rue de Bièvre, cursing the day when I had first set foot in it.

M. de Gourgues congratulated me on the resolution I had come to in leaving the slavery of college, and offered me an education to conduct, which I accepted with gratitude. I returned to Paris, where I was installed as tutor with a merchant of the Petit-Pont, named Maroy.

"Monsieur," said Maroy, delighted with the Président's recommendation, "there is no sacrifice I would not make in order to bring up my only son, and I will grudge no money to a man as able as yourself."

This flattering beginning gave me a better opinion both of myself and the merchant than I had before, and I promised to carry out all his wishes.

"My son," he went on, "has need of a strong will to tame him: he has a character so brutal that I, who am so gentle, cannot imagine how I can have begot a child so little resembling me. It is not easy to master him; he cries, foams at the mouth, struggles; he beats everybody, and respects no one, not even his father."

This preamble would have been like to frighten a tutor in his apprenticeship, but I was tempted to see which was the greater devil of us two. The youthful Maroy made a point of justifying his father's panegyric in all points. He had already driven to distraction five or six masters, and these precedents encouraged him to treat me with as scant ceremony as the others. He commenced at the point where he had finished with my predecessors; but I paid him back in his own coin. When he saw that I cried out louder than himself, was as quick to raise my hand as he was, he reflected seriously as to correcting himself, and his outbreaks gave way before my own. In short, I was able to win a mastery over his mind, which has gone on increasing, since, in the issue, he became my confidential messenger.

The three years which I consecrated to making a lamb of this little Maroy, form the most insignificant part of my life. I do not regret them otherwise, because I must take into consideration the joyous moments that I procured without undoing my purse-strings. It was a valet of Monsieur, named Aquin, who gave me the recipe as to how to obtain gratis that which is everywhere sold. It is called paying with one's person; one's appearance has much to do with it, and words are equivalent to actions; however, I did not confine myself to words. I enjoyed reputation and

favour in my little world, just as M. de Soyecourt at Versailles. I pass over in silence a number of honourable acquaintances which made me the fashion in the mercantile world. Madame Maroy and others swore only by the Abbé. As for me, I swore in God's name, as moderately as possible, that I might not lose the old habit.

I passed into another house, still not despairing of being able to raise myself out of the narrow sphere of the professor. I changed my conduct in changing my pupil. The Marquis de Pluvant, master of the wardrobe of Monsieur,* impressed with my deserts, from having heard me spoken of at Maroy's, who was one of his tradesmen, confided his son to me, a big lad of fifteen, a sort of miniature of the vices and absurdities of people of quality. I took little trouble about him, and let him continue in the slough of his nullity and self-importance. I never missed an opportunity of casting light on the talents and wit which he did not possess; part of my praise returned to me by right, and I used it to increase the esteem with which they had thought fit to gratify me. I insinuated myself by degrees into the friendship of M. de Pluvant, a petty bourgeois who had been ennobled, and whose whole pride was centred in his particle and his charge of the wardrobe of a Prince of the Blood. He had had a genealogy fabricated, the origin of which he was in a hurry to forget.

M. de Pluvant was welcome in the house of M. le Duc de Vendôme, grandson of Henri IV., whose noble qualities, if not his love of women, he possessed. Moreover the Duc—brave, benevolent, knowing neither hate, nor envy, nor revenge—prided himself on his readiness to render a service. The King's brother dubbed him "a good fellow of a Prince." His faults were not those of his rank. Stories are told of his uncleanness which caused the stomach to rise, and his person bore witness to all that can be said on this subject; his laziness passed into a proverb even; for he would not rarely remain a whole week in bed, on the simple pretext that he was undressed all ready for the night. Finally his disinterestedness was carried to the point of utter negligence, and I have known him to be penniless, without his perceiving that he lacked what was necessary. He shared with Monsieur the singular eccentricity of never giving audience except

* *Monsieur* was the invariable title of the brother of the King of France.

when upon his stool. I remember, in this relation, an incident which took place at the time of his commanding the army in Italy. The Bishop of Parma, being sent by the Duke, his master, to treat with him, was introduced, with a great following of clergy, when M. de Vendôme was sitting on this throne. The Bishop was polite enough not to hold his nose when he perceived what the General was doing. A chair of a different kind was given to the Bishop, who commenced a desultory conversation to cover his displeasure.

"Monsieur le Duc," he said, amongst other remarks, "it seems to me, from your face, that you are feverish; the air of this country does not suit you."

"You have only seen my face," replied M. de Vendôme, showing his posterior to the Bishop, who rose in the utmost confusion.

"I am not fit to treat with you, M. le Duc," he said, preparing to go; "I will send you my chaplain, whose manners more resemble your own."

He despatched him Alberoni, who became, like myself, Cardinal and Minister.

This ambassador appeared before M. de Vendôme, at the moment when the latter was rising from his stool. *Ah! culo di angelo!* cried the Italian, falling on his knees as though before a Madonna. M. de Vendôme, charmed at his appreciation, kept him with him, and made a favourite of him.

M. de Pluvant, who had the honour of being admitted to the Prince during these singular audiences, whenever the duties of his post did not detain him with Monsieur, enjoyed a credit which was the measure of his punctuality. M. de Vendôme liked his conversation, habitually analagous to the nature of the séance; he listened to him, did not answer, laughed sometimes, and was altogether at his ease. Now it happened that this worthy Prince, having heard some of my sallies quoted by his Achates, expressed a wish to know me, and M. de Pluvant conceived a jealousy of me, owing to the entry of the wardrobe being permitted me.

CHAPTER IV

A PROPHECY—THE AUDIENCES OF M. DE VENDÔME—M. NASLIN, HIS ALMONER—MONSIEUR, THE DUC D'ORLEANS—DUBOIS IN THE ANTECHAMBER—MADAME DE GRANCEY, THE MISTRESS OF MONSIEUR—THE MORNING VISIT AND THE PINCH OF SNUFF—THE RENDEZVOUS—FAREWELL TO M. DE VENDÔME—THE PRESENTATION—M. DE SAINT-LAURENT—DUBOIS ENTERS AS A FUNCTIONARY AT THE PALAIS-ROYAL—THE PUPIL—THE FIRST FLATTERY

THE first time I appeared before M. Faure, my wide-awake expression, my lips pinched into a sardonic smile, my cunning eyes, and I know not what indefinable quality shed over all my person, had revealed to the Principal the rapid road I was one day to tread; he scrutinised me from top to toe, and cried with an inspiration: "That little villain will be somebody." This premonition, which was realised, had struck me profoundly, and from emulation I had complete faith in it. Hence the perseverance I brought with me to the pursuit of honours and fortune, and now that I have arrived at accomplishment, I know not even yet if I ought to pause. But alas! I commenced the story of my youth with a confession of my infirmities: there is a term to all things; I shall not have the time to become Pope. I remembered the horoscope which M. Faure had drawn for me, when I repaired to M. de Vendôme, who received me without ceremony, as he did everyone. Moreover, one had to know the nature of the seat the Prince occupied to notice it; art having perfectly disguised to the eyes the form of that piece of furniture so indispensable to his constitution. I myself, who have, for several months, assisted daily at his audiences, can say on oath, that they were inoffensive to the nostrils and most decorous. M. de Pluvant, who had fully informed me, was my introducer to the god, who did not rise on my entry. This time etiquette was urgent. He made us be seated on each side of him, and spoke as freely as if he had nothing else to think about.

CHAPTER IV

"My friend," he said, "this good Pluvant has often praised your wit, and I am quite prepared to believe in it."

"Monsieur le Duc," I replied, with a courtier's subtlety, "I am afraid of being unable to do justice to the favourable opinion you have of my wit: if it were a question of my attachment and devotion, I should have less difficulty in producing my proofs."

"Pray do so, my dear Dubois."

"Monseigneur, allow me to tell you as much."

My boldness succeeded better than I could have hoped, and a hearty peal of laughter counselled me to dare all. The interview progressed with a rapid bandying of sallies and verbal quips; I had no trouble in convincing the Prince that I even surpassed my reputation.

"With all this fine doctrine," he asked me, laughing, "are you not a tutor by profession?"

"What matters my fashion of thought, Monseigneur? I have always one according to circumstances, and am of opinion that one should talk reason to sages and laugh with fools. . . . However, I will not conclude from that that I should imitate you on this occasion; I am too conscious of the distance which exists between a Prince of the Blood and me."

With these words I drew back my chair, and the Duc, attributing to the incongruous nature of his own this retreat on my part, redoubled in gaiety. It seems that he flourished on this treatment; for on the morrow he summoned me at the same hour, and to the same place, and thenceforth I went every day to keep him company, without his ever thinking to reward my assiduity. Lord knows all the fine tales and falsehoods I dealt out to him as aperients; and M. de Pluvant, jealous of the favour I enjoyed, to his detriment, often complained to me that I was seeking to supplant him. He ended by dismissing me, and I found myself without a place, and with but meagre resources. The only advantage I had reaped from my presentation to the wardrobe of M. de Vendôme was the acquaintance of sundry titled personages, who called me the *Abbé*, quite short, and were pleased to laugh at my pasquinades. None of them, however, had offered me his protection. I reminded myself in time of the evangelical precept: *petite et accipietis*; ask and ye shall receive.

Among the persons who wished me well was M. Raslin,

almoner of M. de Vendôme, more man of the world than priest, with good-nature written on his features, as health was on his fat belly. He began by pretending to an alliance, by the left hand or the right, with the family of the Mortemarts, on whom Madame de Montespan had attracted the King's favours; but when the star of this mistress paled before that of Madame de Maintenon, he disembarrassed himself, little by little, of the relationship, and finished by swearing that he had not a drop of Mortemart blood in his veins. This little fantasy excepted, M. Raslin was a most estimable man, who devoted his revenues of twenty thousand livres to Satan, his pomps and works, rather than to the Church; a mighty egoist and a consummate courtier. Seeing me so correct in my simplicity, and so jovial in my conversation, he had no suspicion that my fare was meagre, and that I often found myself hard put for a dinner.

One day, when I was assisting with him at the audience of M. de Vendôme, I took a firm resolution to issue from my slough.

"Monseigneur," I said, "would you be able to find me a pupil?"

"Is the education of the little Pluvant finished then? His father, so it seems, is not enchanted with you."

"On the contrary, it is I who am not with him; he pays me too modestly; for I am not humble enough to value myself at three hundred crowns a year: a common schoolmaster would not be found for that price."

"Certainly, Monsieur Dubois," said the Abbé Raslin, "I know nothing of your morals; but I look upon you as a learned man: one can see that you have passed through the hands of the Jesuit fathers."

"Forgive me, my poor Dubois," cried the Duc. "I thought you were good at the most to teach jackdaws and parrots."

"Remember," I interrupted, "the Constable de Luynes began no differently. Genius consists in seizing the opportune moment."

"*Ventre Saint gris!* as my grandfather said," added M. de Vendôme, "you are right. And your request would be worse received if I were in different state of health."

"Ah, Monseigneur," I answered, "how happy I am that the stool influences you in my favour."

"Raslin," said he, "I recommend you this joker, and beg you to exert yourself warmly in placing him as he deserves."

"Beware, Monseigneur," said I, "there is no bishopric vacant."

"On the contrary," replied M. de Vendôme, "that of Charenton."

Monsieur, the King's brother, was announced; the almoner and I rose to leave. The Duc, without changing his posture, said to the Prince: "Monsieur d'Orléans, here is a scapegrace named Dubois, who has the demon's own wit and cunning, and who wishes for a tutorship."

"Let him see the sub-governor of the Duc de Chartres," replied Monsieur; "they will find some place for him."

Monsieur resembled the King his brother, the most handsome man of his time, in no respect whatever. He was of small stature, without the least distinction in his appearance or manners; his hair and eyebrows accentuated the pallor of his long, narrow face; his dark and wide open eyes accorded ill with a small mouth garnished with hideous teeth; he paid all the minute attentions of a woman to his toilette and his pleasures: his good qualities, however, always gave umbrage to Louis XIV.

Monsieur had certainly come on business connected with gaming, a ball, or a masquerade, for he asked me no questions, as was his general habit, and I withdrew to the antechamber with the almoner, who clapped my shoulder, saying, "Comrade, you have one foot in the stirrup. . . ."

"Unluckily I am not yet in the saddle."

"Wait here until His Highness comes out. I shall be much mistaken if he does not speak to you."

Indeed, as he crossed the antechamber, the Prince approached me with an affable air: "Are you a Jansenist?"

"Heaven forbid, Monseigneur!"

"You are not married?"

"I have never been married."

"What is your name?"

"Dubois, Monseigneur."

"Do you happen to be a relation of my valet, who bears the same name as you?"

"Perhaps, Monseigneur."

"On what side?"

"On the side of Adam, apparently."

"Are you fond of chimes?"

"Monseigneur! . . ."

"You are not fond of chimes?"

"I did not say that."

"Will you go from me to M. de Saint-Laurent?"

"With the most profound gratitude, Monseigneur."

Thereupon, he turned his back on me, saying to the Chevalier de Lorraine, who accompanied him: "Philippe, I am in low spirits to-day; to restore myself I am going to hear the chimes of the Samaritaine."

M. Raslin congratulated me on not having undergone a longer cross-examination, which might have become embarrassing to a less skilled liar. He advised me to lose no time before making use of Monsieur's recommendation; and, as he found me of a like opinion, he proposed that we should go together to see M. de Saint-Laurent, whom he knew of old. I accepted his obliging offer, and on the way he related to me a story of the strange reception which Monsieur (nicknamed the *Enquirer*) had given to a person whom he did not know; it was a *protégé* of his mistress, La Grancey:

"I presume," the Prince said to him, "you come from the army?"

"No, Monseigneur," replied the other, "I have never been to the war."

"Do you come then from your country house?"

"No, Monseigneur, I have not got one."

"You live in the provinces, no doubt?"

"No, Monseigneur, I have never left Paris."

"As that is so, you live, I suppose, with your family?"

"No, Monseigneur, I have no relations."

Monsieur was disconcerted, gave a laugh, and withdrew.

We arrived at the Palais-Royal; but, as Raslin had feared, M. de Saint-Laurent was occupied with the young duke. We kicked our heels there until they came to inform the almoner that the sub-governor was visible to him alone. I understood that my presence would have rendered the interview awkward, and trusting to the dear Abbé's friendship, I tried to put a face upon it before the lackeys, who were eyeing me with disdainful glances. "Rascals!" said I to myself, "you shall change your tone if ever I become anything in the palace." At the end of

a quarter of an hour M. Raslin returned to me; his air of dissatisfaction foreboded no good tidings: he waited until we were in the street to satisfy my impatience.

"Well!" said I, "you have seen M. de Saint-Laurent? What am I to hope?"

"I don't know; but I think success will be difficult unless you are provided with the recommendation of Madame de Grancey."

"What? Is the Duc de Chartres still in petticoat strings?"

"You may understand me as it seems good to you; but this is the fact: M. de Saint-Laurent, whom I found very sick with the gout, told me that he would do all that in him lay to be agreeable to M. le Duc de Vendôme. But he let me guess that Madame de Grancey continued to enjoy great influence in the Palais-Royal, and that a word from her mouth would work marvels in your favour."

"Did you lay enough stress on the promise Monsieur condescended to make me?"

"I did not fail to; but it seems that Madame de Grancey, with whom His Highness was greatly in love, retains the privilege of appointing to all the places in his household; between ourselves, I imagine it is her interest to do so."

"I don't see what sop I can throw to her; I will reflect, however. But is there any office vacant which might suit me?"

"Certainly. M. le Saulnier, formerly Principal of the College of Treasurers, who taught the Prince grammar, died last week. . . ."

"Faith! he has done well, and I am infinitely obliged to him. I will be grammarian in despite of envy."

I obtained information about Madame de Grancey, which enabled me to ensure a good reception from her. M. de Vendôme sang me a goodly number of couplets composed on her gallantries, her amours with Monsieur, and her bad habits. "She has never done anything," he said to me, "but gamble with her lovers up till five or six of a morning, regale herself, smoke tobacco, and the rest." This *rest* would have been perfectly convenient for my tastes and requirements, but the competition was not permitted me. However, my imagination came to my aid, and on the following day, elegantly attired and scented, I repaired to the Palais-Royal, where this lady was lodged, on the same floor with Monsieur. The name

of the Duc de Vendôme, which I flung at the lackeys' heads, soon franked me past the door. I was introduced into the sleeping-chamber of Madame de Grancey, who was still in bed. I indulged in salutations to the very ground. I noticed that the lady was prying at a little sealed parcel that I carried under my arm: she was trying to guess what I had brought.

"Monsieur," she said, "is, perhaps, the person who is seeking the place of house-steward?"

"It is not I, Madame. . . ."

"No doubt you have come after the post of porter?"

"Just as little, Madame. M. le Saulnier. . . ."

"I understand; you are a tutor, a reader; one may be able to arrange with you."

"My unworthy deserts would be but a poor augury of success, Madame, did I not hope for your good offices."

"Explain yourself, my good friend."

"I know, Madame, that you have the ear of Monsieur."

"You may take it so."

"I believe I am capable of filling the honourable post which I solicit near the person of His Highness, the Duc de Chartres. M. de Vendôme, who has interested himself in me, has deigned to present me to His Royal Highness, Monsieur; M. de Saint-Laurent only awaits your assent. . . ."

"As I told you, I see no obstacle. What is it you have there?"

"The same snuff which is used by the King of England."

"Snuff? For me?"

"Nay, Madame; but I thought that M. de Contade. . . ."

"It is true Contade loves good snuff. O, the exquisite perfume! It must be delicious; indeed, it is most excellent!"

Madame de Grancey yielded to the temptation; and from the huge pinches with which she powdered her nose, I saw plainly that my suit was gained. This lady, whose folly was almost as great as her beauty, caused me certain distractions which drew my attention from the object of my visit; the disorder of her toilette was not foreign to this; she perceived my emotion, and smiled, asking me my name. A woman is always sensible of the sentiment which she inspires. She told me to count upon her, and to procure for M. de Contade some more of that excellent tobacco which she liked so much.

Madame de Grancey did not forget me; for the next day I

received my commission to replace the late M. Le Saulnier, and a note from my patroness, for which I thanked my good looks. It was a sort of rendezvous, its pretext being to instruct me in my duties, and fix a day for my presentation to M. de Saint-Laurent. I went to the place indicated, and convinced myself that Madame de Grancey reaped profit, either in money or nature, from the power which she exercised in the Palais-Royal. I was doubly protected, and I proved the falsity of the rumours which Madame de Bouillon and the Marquise d'Alluye had spread at Court as to the health of this lady. Thus it was that I signalled my entry into the great world; I did not renounce, however, bourgeois and vulgar amours.

M. de Vendôme heard of my nomination with pleasure; and although he entertained some doubts of my morality, he congratulated me with his military frankness.

"Dubois," he said to me, "there is no question here of bringing up some little tradesman; you are about to become responsible for the education of a Prince; walk straight if you wish to make your way."

"Monseigneur," I replied, "I have a sure foot and a good eye, and I shall not make a false step unless I intend to do so. Moreover, I do not think to stop at the beginning; I feel more stuff in me than goes to the making of a mere tutor."

He promised to recommend me warmly to Monsieur, who had spoken to him of me the night before, and of my fine teeth; he smiled at this characteristic detail. The Abbé Raslin, astonished that a poor devil of my description should have moved the avarice of the Grancey, displayed lively satisfaction at my success. He offered to present me to Madame Charlotte d'Orléans, on whose German roughness he expatiated to me. She was a mere nonentity in her husband's household, where she was left to write unceasingly interminable letters to her thousand and one relations. The King, however, whom her original remarks amused, showed much deference and friendship towards her; she did not lack resources to be useful to the persons whom she liked, and the Abbé Raslin, assiduous in paying his court to her, owed her the fat revenues which he accumulated without accusing himself of simony. Blessed are the humble of spirit, says the Gospel. As for me, I adopt the reverse of the proverb.

It was on the 1st February 1685 that my presentation to M. de

Saint-Laurent occurred; and he, in his turn, presented me to his pupil. Madame de Grancey was anxious to conduct me to him herself. She was superbly adorned: I saw her for the first time in the full light of day. I noticed from her face, plastered with rouge and powder, that she was no longer in her springtime; none the less, I did not repent me of what I had done for her, remembering what she had done for me. We entered the closet of M. de Saint-Laurent, who, in spite of his infirmities, rose to meet her, taking no notice of me. I augured ill from the fellow's haughtiness. A singular face he had for a sub-governor! A complexion at once bilious and pimply, a nose disproportionately long, a mouth gaping from ear to ear, little eyes one had to guess at in the uncouth face. The big head on the little body produced an effect so comical, that the Duc de Chartres, who had been placed in the hands of this hideous pedagogue at the age of six, could never behold him without bursting into laughter. Add to these fine physical qualities a vanity, a pedantry, and an ignorance that could not be surpassed.

"Monsieur de Saint-Laurent," said Madame de Grancey to this repulsive sight, "I have just come to hand over to you this young man, with whom you will be as pleased as myself."

"What can this great fellow do, Madame?"

"Faith, Monsieur—anything. . . . However, you will judge of him yourself."

"He is very young," resumed the old ape, staring at me with a suspicious air.

"Monsieur," said I, most politely, "I had thought my thirty years put me out of reach of such a reproach; notwithstanding, if you prefer me to put on a few years, I willingly agree, and will go on adding them, so long as it pleases you, until they carry me inclusively to the grave."

"Pooh, young man!" cried he, "you are witty, I am sorry for you; you will never be sub-governor. Pray do not spoil our pupil, who is already too much inclined towards such puerile playing with words."

"Don't frighten my *protégé*," replied Madame de Grancey, "nor make it a reproach to him that he talks as other men write; I am certain that you will get more out of him than you think. He has powerful protectors, and I beg you to show him a good countenance with the Prince; it is I whom you will oblige."

Madame de Grancey threw a glance of intelligence at me, and left us, after having repeated her advice to me to be prudent. I had already my plan of conduct formed. I had divined the stupidity of the sub-governor from his outer man; and thenceforth, I looked upon his place as belonging to me by right.

"Monsieur," he said to me, when we were alone, "it seems that Madame de Grancey does not protect you without a motive."

"Of what motive do you speak, Monsieur?"

"I mean to say that you are a relation or a friend."

"Neither, to my regret, for if that were so I should not start with a post worth only fifteen hundred livres."

"At your age I had not as much; but I am afraid that you will be compelled to be contented with it, for Messieurs d'Estrades, Renaudot, and myself are charged with all that relates to the education of the Prince."

"I am quite aware that M. le Comte d'Estrades is His Highness's governor; you are his sub-governor, Monsieur. As to M. Renaudot, he is attached to you, as I am, in the quality of deputy, when you are indisposed and not in a state to continue your lessons."

"You are well informed, Monsieur; but I will instruct you in your duties; I count on your zeal. They have spoken to me with praise of your talent for reading aloud. I am delighted to be able to utilise it; we require a person who can read for two or three hours on end, and the *valet-de-chambre*, whom I employed, did not come up to my requirements."

"My functions then will be confined to those of a reader?"

"That is not all; you will be my assistant, and will prepare the lessons. This task will be beyond your strength; but you have to guide you the advice of the wisest men, of Messieurs La Fontaine, Maucroix, and Faure."

"I shall not be in the proximity of the Prince, then?"

"For what good; am I not there? You will make extracts from the Universal History, the History of the Church, the Acts of the Martyrs, and selections from the best modern French poets; the rest concerns me."

"That is to say, you retain all relations with M. le Duc de Chartres?"

"My friend, I fathom your thought; but I warn you all

the places are filled, and the wisest course is to content your self with that you have."

"Monsieur, will you be pleased to point out to me where I am lodged?"

"You will be conducted presently to your room, where all the necessary books await you. Start on your functions immediately."

Monsieur arrived at this moment, and said to me with a smile: "So here you are installed, my friend; forget the wicked stories you told my cousin, M. de Vendôme. Madame de Grancey has spoken well of you to me; I recommend you to be careful on the article of religion; my son has excellent principles. . . ."

"He shall never lose them as long as I am alive, Monseigneur," said M. de Saint-Laurent.

"And your gout, my old friend?" continued Monsieur, with his accustomed volubility; "take repose, take care of yourself, and get cured. Adieu; I recommend this jack-priest to you."

M. de Saint-Laurent, who was accustomed to the trivial cackling of Monsieur, resumed our conversation where he had left it, whilst I stood aghast at his strange recommendation.

"One would imagine," he said maliciously, "that you were weak in religion."

"I have quite enough for my needs."

Another door opened, and a young boy ran towards us, and addressing M. de Saint-Laurent, "Monsieur, are we going to Vespers to-day?"

"As your Highness pleases."

"I should be very pleased," replied the Prince. "Tell me, I beg you," he added, "what M. Renaudot means by these words: 'Princes never die.'"

"Did M. Renaudot say that?" asked the sub-governor, with embarrassment.

"Monseigneur," I cried quickly, "it is true that good princes live ever in the memory of their people."

"Who is that gentleman?" asked the Duc de Chartres.

"Monseigneur, the person who takes the place of M. Le Saulnier."

"So much the better," said he, laughing.

CHAPTER V

THE DUC DE CHARTRES—THE PERMISSION—MADAME DE CHOISEUL—THE DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS—THE CORRESPONDENCE—THE GRANCEY AND THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE—THE MARQUIS DE VILLEQUIER AND M. DE HARLAY, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS—THE FAMILY PORTRAITS—THE SUPPER—THE ABBÉ DE CHAULIEU—THE MARQUIS DE LA FARE—THE SURGEON FELIX—MADAME D'ESPAGNY, MADEMOISELLE CHOUIN AND THE GRAND DAUPHIN

THE young Duc de Chartres, who was not yet ten years old, was as lovely as a Cupid; all the Court ladies admired his pretty white skin, his beautiful chestnut hair, his soft and mischievous eyes, his fresh and lustrous complexion; and to these ladies the face of His Highness lost none of its grace or beauty, since the sun of Italy and Spain tanned it and rendered it more male. The Prince, with his little frame, well made at that time, showed no promise of ever growing tall. In fact, he is not tall now, and his stoutness becomes him amazingly; he does not walk any better at present than he did as a child; this is due to one leg being shorter than the other. As for his sight, it has improved; for, at the age of four, a sort of humour which came from his eyes almost deprived him of it completely; a powder prescribed him by his doctor, M. Gendron, saved him from going blind. He seemed to me of delicate health, but this was fortunately re-established, owing to the good *régime* under which I subsequently put him. In short, M. le Duc de Chartres was a pupil such as I could have wished, docile and ready to receive all impressions. I promised myself, under my breath, from that moment, to set to work as soon as I should have the place of that imbecile M. de Saint-Laurent.

This child, by the very first words he addressed me, told me of the bourgeois education he had received.

"Monsieur," said he, "will you take me to Vespers?"

"As your Highness pleases," I replied; and I prepared to

follow him, groaning secretly at the school of bigotry which was spoiling a prince so happily constituted. I confess, to my shame, I had not set foot in a church for more than five years, and it cost me something to play at piety, good comedian though I am. But M. de Saint-Laurent saved me all remorse by recalling his pupil.

"Monsieur," said he, "you are mistaken as to M. Dubois' post; he is only an assistant I have taken on, a sort of secretary-reader who will be very useful to you; but it is for M. d'Estrades and myself to see you fulfil your religious duties."

"Then," said the little Duke with a vexed air, "I shall not go to Vespers to-day. This gentleman has really got a face which promises well."

"Monseigneur," I answered, with a sweeping curtesy, "my face tells no lies, if it shows you all the attachment I have for you."

"M. de Saint-Laurent," went on the Prince, "see that this gentleman's lessons begin soon; I shall take much interest in them, and I am sure that they will profit me more than those of that poor M. Le Saulnier, who squinted so abominably." He did not suspect, speaking so, that with age the same infirmity would befall himself.

"I beg you, Monseigneur," I continued, in a contrite voice, "to grant me leave of absence for two days, which I desire to pass with some friends to whom I would say good-bye. . . ."

"Really," interrupted the Duc de Chartres, "one would say, that just because you have entered my household, you were going to die or start for the other world. . . ."

"Ah, Monseigneur," I replied, "how can I express to you my gratitude and joy? But I ought to thank my protectors who have made me what I am, M. le Duc de Vendôme, above all. . . ."

"So be it; but if you do not return in two days, I shall know how to torment you."

During this interview, M. de Saint-Laurent bit his lips, and wished me to the devil from the bottom of his heart; he would have liked to know me far enough away. I remained, however; and the Duc de Chartres, with all a child's flippancy, pronounced a few words which seemed to me to augur well for the plan of education I had formed.

"You know," he said to M. de Saint-Laurent, "that pretty Duchesse de Choiseul?"

"I do not understand you," replied the pedagogue.

"What! the niece of Madame de La Vallière, who has such lovely eyes, and who dances so well, from what they say?"

"I do not see, Monsieur, what you would refer to," continued M. de Saint-Laurent.

"They have brought her back to Paris with the small-pox; she would rather die than be disfigured, and she walked about all night in the frost."

"Who gave you these details?"

"Laurent, my *valet-de-chambre*, who had them from M. de Choiseul's people."

I started laughing at this resemblance of names, which was gall to the sub-governor. The latter made a sign to me that I could go; but I did not deem it fitting to profit so quickly by this permission, which had the air of a command.

"Dubois," said the Prince to me, with a laugh, "I have another servant also, who has the same name as you."

"Then you have two, Monseigneur"; and I went out, quite satisfied with my *début*. M. de Saint-Laurent already detested me as a dangerous rival.

I went in search of M. Raslin, who was waiting to conduct me to Madame d'Orléans.

"Well," he cried, as he saw me coming, "is the ship in harbour?"

"At anchor, and shortly to set sail, in all success; the sub-governor hates me already as much as if we had known each other ten years."

"A good sign, my dear Dubois; I dreamt last night that you had mounted in rank, and I believe in dreams as in the Gospel."

We talked long of my presentation and the hopes it held out to me; then we repaired to Madame, who received us after Mass. We found her in her closet, in full ceremonial dress, seated before a table loaded with papers, where she had started writing. This Princess did not strike me as so ugly as I had been told; she was a German beauty, without grace or delicacy, her fresh and ruddy complexion, fat cheeks, buxom figure, and plump arms did honour to her robust health; her eyes were fine enough, and her long, white teeth did not spoil her mouth. In the distance, 'tis true, the red patch where her eyebrows should have been, damaged the general effect of her face. I have since had occasion

to remark her awkward gait, which made her seem deformed. She did not rise at our entry, but went on writing with a rapidity which astonished me.

"M. Raslin," said she, with her Palatine accent, without laying down her pen, "to-day, Thursday, I am corresponding with my aunt, the dear Electress of Hanover; I have only written twelve sheets, and, as there is abundance of news, I think I shall run to thirty."

I knew that Madame devoted each day of the week to a special correspondence. On Sunday, she wrote to Lorraine and Hanover; on Monday, to Savoy and Spain; on Tuesday, to Prussia; on Wednesday, to Modena; on Thursday, to Hanover again; on Friday, once more to Lorraine; and on Saturday she worked off the arrears of the week. I have heard her say: "When, in a day, I have written twenty sheets to the Princess of Wales, ten or twelve to my daughter, twenty to the Queen of Sicily, I feel almost tired out." Louis XIV bantered her on her epistolary outpour. He presented her one day with a list of a hundred horses, killed in her postal service for one year. When one reflects that this epistolary commerce with all the Courts of Europe was continued for more than forty years, one is almost aghast; it needs a woman to accustom herself to such an exercise. I have laughed sometimes when I thought of the fine reputation the good lady must have given me abroad. But I return to our first interview, which did not foreshadow the frank hostility in which we were subsequently to live.

"Madame," said M. Raslin, "I am taking the liberty of presenting to your Royal Highness the tutor whom M. de Saint-Laurent has taken to assist him in the education of Monseigneur the Duc de Chartres."

At these words, she looked at me with a minuteness of attention which I sustained with the utmost effrontery.

"Ah!" said she, "Monsieur is the Dubois of whom someone spoke to me favourably enough; in truth, my friend, your physiognomy doesn't belie the good I have been told of you."

"Madame," I answered, with an address which was natural to me, but which another would have owed to the influence of the air of Court, "I shall have my work cut out to be worthy of the kindness that has been shown to me, but I hope to succeed with God's help and the advice of your Royal Highness."

"I am pleased that you have come," she resumed, observing me the while; "I had just reached you, and I can now trace your portrait after nature."

I posed at my best, whilst the Princess put me questions of every nature, never failing to take down the substance of my replies in writing. I thought myself a personage already; for I did not know that everything went down in this universal correspondence, in which the crudity of the language often surpassed that of the matter. Perhaps I found myself bracketed at hazard between swindlers and women of the town.

"M. Dubois," she said to me again, gravely, when she had finished the passage which related to me, "your salary amounts to fifteen hundred livres, I am told; would you like me to add five hundred from my exchequer?"

"Madame," I cried with an expression of gratitude which was not feigned, "what have I done to merit . . .?"

"Nothing as yet, but you will have to earn this money. You will find yourself, from the nature of your functions, at my son's side almost night and day."

"I am proud of that honour," I replied, guessing in advance what she expected of my complaisance.

"I am often short of details concerning him, and yet the Duc de Chartres ought to figure in all my letters; it is a lacuna to supply, and for that I count upon you."

"Madame, I dare also count upon myself, when it is a question of proving my zeal."

"I beg you then to keep a journal of the tasks and sayings of my son; you will bring it me each week, and the five hundred livres will soon be doubled if I am satisfied with your intelligence."

I accepted with joy the espionage entrusted to me, which could be exploited to the profit of my advancement; for I proposed to make my young Prince speak from time to time in his preceptor's favour. Moreover, had I been a more honest man, the approval of M. Raslin would have silenced my scruples.

A huge packet of news was now brought to the Princess, which told me that I should not be the only employé of Madame's inquisitiveness. She opened it hastily, read it in silence, and cried with a radiant air: "At last, that wretched woman will go!" Then turning towards the almoner: "Raslin, what I

announced to you has happened; the King has considered my complaints against the Grancey; she grows more insolent every day."

I was mighty careful not to defend my protectress, who would have been of no use with the Duchesse d'Orléans.

"Conceive," she said, "that this animal has boasted of having me turned out of my house; she has dared to make a mighty fuss over a pretended *liaison* with Monsieur, who has not his equal in timidity; he is a very Joseph; she needs must have taken him by force then, as she tried to do to her shame. Monsieur himself told me so; and, since the danger he underwent, he refuses to be left alone with the hussy. At last, the amours of the Grancey with the Chevalier de Lorraine have given me a pretext to be avenged on an impudent woman. Here I am informed that the King has bitterly reproached Monsieur with the morals of his household, and begged him to banish the Grancey in order to stop the scandal. On the day I see her go, I will have a *Te Deum* sung."

Madame was induced to read us sundry fragments of these secret notes, which seemed to me to be written by a practised hand. I learnt later that the Marquis de Dangeau and the Duc de Saint-Simon took part in this petty espionage, a branch of which had been confided to me. The Duchesse d'Orléans, with that confidence which resembled indiscretion, read us a selection of anecdotes of the day, which M. Raslin listened to with less astonishment than I should have looked for in an almoner. I recall, amongst others, the following, which was bandied about in every conversation.

M. le Marquis de Villequier had intimate relations with the Duchesse d'Aumont, his step-mother, whilst his wife took her revenge with M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris. This Madame de Villequier, who laid out the dead as a penance, recompensed herself for these pious mortifications by denying herself no lover. For some time past she had chosen them in preference from the Church; and the Curé de Saint-Méry, as well as the handsome Prior of Saint-Martin, succeeded, turn in turn, to M. de Harlay. The young Duchesse d'Aumont even surpassed this noble example, and remained in Paris, in order to abandon herself more freely to gallantry; for the old Duke, who had taken her as his second wife, was retained by his service at Versailles. Now, M. de

Villequier, in his frequent expeditions to the Hôtel d'Aumont, became enamoured of a chamber-maid, who could not be more cruel than her mistress. This girl was got with child, dismissed, and revenged herself by providing the Marquis with the means of proving Madame d'Aumont's infidelities. They were with the Archbishop of Paris, who had no more respect for the daughter than the step-mother. M. de Villequier, vexed that such a strange rival should have been selected, and not suspecting that he was doubly his rival, hastened to Versailles to proclaim what he had seen in Madame d'Aumont's bed-chamber; the scandal spread so quickly, that M. de Coulanges made songs out of the adventure. M. le Duc d'Aumont retired to his estates; Madame de Villequier to her oratory; and M. de Harlay, anxious about the consequences of the affair, sought out Madame de Maintenon, in order that she might hush it up, while at the same time he fired a countermine by accusing M. de Villequier of having had an adulterous relation with his step-mother. These accusations laid bare a host of amorous mysteries, at which everybody laughed except the interested parties. The King came in time to check the torrent of truths; he sent for M. de Villequier, and said to him severely: "Monsieur, I recommend you to silence the reports to which you have so imprudently given cause; not only do they nearly touch the honour of the Church, but they cast a serious slur on your own and that of your family; I warn you that, in case this scandal continues, we shall see whether M. de Harlay is as guilty as you say, and if others are not more so than he is. Now you see what you have to do."

M. de Villequier, who was a courtier before everything, did not hesitate, and himself gave the lie to what he had affirmed on oath; he protested that he had been grossly mistaken, made his excuses to M. de Harlay, to Madame d'Aumont, and was equally gracious to his wife; only he never spoke of her, without adding this as a parenthesis: "I, who am not worth an archbishop."

Madame read us with a marvellous *sang-froid* this scandalous chronicle, of which the crudity would have brought a blush to the cheek of anyone save myself. As to the worthy Raslin, he was accustomed to these manners, and took no offence at them whatever. As I was looking at the family portraits with which the walls were lined, Madame interrupted herself to say to me: "Notice, if you please, that I have not got a third of my

ancestors there; which is easy to believe, when you know that the Princes-Palatine yield in nobility to no sovereign in Europe. The king is convinced of this better than anyone; for, on the occasion of my marriage with Monsieur, he thanked me for the honour I did his family."

The sitting had lasted long, and Madame perceived this with a cry of regret.

"Four o'clock," she said, "I shall never finish my letters to-day; I shall have to finish them this evening during the ombre party of Madame la Maréchale de Clerambault. Dubois, I recommend you my news, all that you see, all that you hear; your money is waiting for you."

We left, enchanted with this reception, without stiffness or etiquette.

"Dubois," said M. Raslin to me, "since you stay with us to-day, I wish you to make the acquaintance of the intendant of Messieurs de Vendôme, the Abbé de Chaulieu, who has arrived this morning from the Château d'Anet, with his friend the Marquis of La Fare."

I had not failed to hear of those two amiable poets who imitated Anacreon, at the age of forty-five; although my taste did not lead me to read much verse, I knew many of their prettiest songs by heart. M. de Vendôme had so often praised these two free-livers in my presence, that I was overjoyed to encounter them. The acquaintance was prompt and complete. M. Raslin presented me to M. Chaulieu, who greeted me as a person he had already seen, embraced me warmly, and invited me to a supper at which he was gathering a few friends together to celebrate his arrival. I accepted his invitation, and the almoner required no more pressing than I did. We went together to an ordinary of renown, where we found a numerous and brilliant company.

Our Amphitryon, the Abbé Chaulieu, had one of those open, merry, and beaming countenances, which would give an appetite, if need were, to twenty guests. I admired the majesty of his double chin and his fine hair, which fell in waves upon his shoulders; I could not think that an intendant could thus grow fat, save at his master's expense, and easily persuaded myself, in the intimate company of this epicurean, that with all his voluptuous and gallant affairs, none was dearer to him than that

of the fortune of the Vendômes. He had a foundation of method and cunning which betrayed his Norman origin. However, he has proved, I know not how, that honesty sometimes enriches. The Marquis de La Fare and he revived the ancient friendship of Castor and Pollux; I am afraid, however, that they will not become stars after their death. Mere poets of the dinner table and the pavement have the glory and ephemeral fortune of butterflies; they pass away like the frivolities they have so greatly loved. La Fare had suffered more than his friend from the dissipated life which he led deliberately, being in no more fear of death than I am myself to-day. His hair was beginning to grow thin about his brow, and he said to us, with a smile, that the leaves fall sometimes before winter. He had a noble air, which seduced at once, and his distinguished manners testified to the progress he had made in the school of Hamilton; whatever efforts he made, however, to steel his heart against love and sentiment, Madame de La Sablière always put his philosophy to flight. This tender and delicate sentiment, which he struggled against in vain, gave to his physiognomy and words alike a tinge of melancholy which was also pleasure. The campaigns he went through under the great Condé, whilst marking his courage, did not correct the careless indolence in which his last days were spent. The guests whom the two friends had gathered together were by no means neophytes, and I confess that I was still far from showing a like prowess with the bottle. The end of the orgie, where Venus took the place of Bacchus, permitted me to rehabilitate the reputation of my capacity. The supper, which was prolonged till morning, taught me that great lords were past-masters in debauchery, and compared with them I had the air of a little cit. The celebrated surgeon Félix assisted at the *fête*, and wine compromised in him the gravity of the learned faculty. He related to us the story of his sister, which I will repeat with the dignity of a fasting Cardinal.

"Do you know, gentlemen," he asked us, "the Damozel Chouin, maid of honour to the great Princesse de Conti? Faith, what a maid of honour! She is small, with short legs, which hardly seem to belong to her body; she has a moon face, with twinkling eyes almost in her forehead, a turn-up nose, and a mouth that stretches from ear to ear, set off with the most horrible teeth in the world. I am assured that she is witty, and in truth it would

be but a weak compensation for such physical blemishes. I won't speak to you of her monstrous bosom, which particularly charms Monsieur le Dauphin, not over fastidious in such matters. However, one day when he was at the chase with the Duchesse d'Orléans, in the environs of Fontainebleau, he went to rest in the house of my sister, Madame Desplanes, recently married to M. d'Espagny. My sister is as pretty as the Chouin is hideous, and Monseigneur, to whom all things are good, took a fancy to his charming hostess; he stared at her for an hour, without uttering a word, rapping his shoes with the sheath of his sword. My poor sister, who had never seen a prince of the blood so near her, let herself be dazzled to the point of forgetting her second husband; the first had already been long forgotten. It seems that Monseigneur had no recollection of having been well treated by the maids of honour of Madame la Dauphine; he installed himself for some days with Madame d'Espagny, who did not stint him in hospitality. To reward her, he gave her, without her asking for it, a written promise of marriage, declaring that he would wed her in the event of the deaths of her husband and the Dauphine. Thereupon, he returned to Versailles, to fall once more under the sway of Mademoiselle Chouin. My sister, sighing already for a second widowhood, was not slow to follow the faithless one. It was then she informed me I was all but the brother-in-law of Monseigneur. I told her to act as she liked, but above all not to mix me up in such ridiculous pretensions. In fact, she had several interviews with the Dauphin, who begged her to keep quiet; she made all the more noise, and rushed like a Bacchante to Mademoiselle Chouin, whose intimacy with the Dauphin was known to everyone—he is more debauched than any of us, gentlemen. Now, it's hard enough for two women who are friends to agree; what will be the case with two rivals! Explanations were interrupted by tears, cries, insults, and threats. Mademoiselle Chouin, having touched upon a promise of marriage in her possession, Madame d'Espagny produced her own and waved it victoriously in her rival's face, who seized it and tore it to fragments. Her own face was like to meet with the same fate: my sister threw herself upon the Chouin to tear her to pieces; the Dauphin luckily arrived, and calmed this combat, which his weakness had excited; but fearing a public repetition of it, in the King's presence, he took the side of the lady whose promise of

marriage was intact, and had Madame d'Espagny banished to her husband's family at Soissons! Observe the ingratitude of the great! Wherefore, gentlemen, if you have beautiful and susceptible sisters, I conjure you to bid them beware of princes of the blood, and especially of promises of marriage."

CHAPTER VI

M. DE SAINT-LAURENT'S ILLNESS — THE CAPUCINS OF THE LOUVRE—FAGON, PHYSICIAN TO THE KING—MARIA THERESA OF AUSTRIA—SENSUAL EDUCATION OF THE DUC DE CHARTRES—LA FONTAINE AND DUBOIS—MADAME DE LA VIEUVILLE AND THE DUC DE CHARTRES—DUBOIS IN DANGER OF DISGRACE—THE *CHOUCROUTE* OF THE DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS—DUBOIS' INDIGESTION—THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE—M. THÉVENOT—DUBOIS CHANGES HIS PLAN—THE LESSON AND CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU—DEATH OF M. DE SAINT-LAURENT—RACINE—PRAISE OF DUBOIS

M. DE SAINT-LAURENT having fallen dangerously ill, and being incapable of continuing his lessons, it was necessary, to his great regret, that I should take his place; for he was well aware that I should make no scruple of supplanting him if that were possible. However, I hid my game; I visited him in his bed, implored him to recover quickly, for his health interested us all, and M. le Duc de Chartres would hear of no other teacher save himself. In short, I moved him to tears, and he begged me to continue as his substitute with the Prince. I advised him to have recourse to the remedies which the Prior of Chabrières had left the King on his death. This quack cured the gout in the feet, and drove it to the head or some other part of the body; he had killed M. d'Elbœuf, the Abbé d'Harcourt, and the Duchesse d'Estrées; his pretended secrets caused a thousand assassinations besides. M. de Saint-Laurent thanked me for my good advice, but did not follow it. I also proposed to him to summon the Capucins of the Louvre, who were then exploiting their Powder of Sympathy, with a success which marvellous deaths had proved. The patient distrusted my pharmacopia, and, fearing to die a fortnight the sooner, would only have recourse to the first surgeon of the King. This was Félix, who had operated on His Majesty for fistula a year previously. This able man was assisted by Fagon, nicknamed the Poisoner, the King's physician.

This Fagon seemed hardly to be human, he was so hideous,

CHAPTER VI

but his soul did not deserve any fairer lodging. He was accused by public opinion of the death of Queen Maria Theresa of Austria. His friendship for Madame de Maintenon gave food for thought. The Queen had an abscess under her arm; Fagon had the inconceivable idea to blood her. Gervais, the surgeon to whom Félix succeeded, said: "Monsieur, reflect seriously! It will be the Queen's death."

"Do as I bid you," replied Fagon, imperiously.

"It is your wish that I should kill my mistress," said the surgeon, shedding tears.

The bleeding took place; the disease attacked the heart; the emetic prescribed by Fagon completed this fine treatment, which brought its author money and office. Madame was prudent enough not to entrust her life to this executioner, whom Madame de Maintenon seemed to have made the instrument of her projects and vengeance.

This Fagon had wit withal. He said to the King, who was speaking of punishing libertinage: "People fell in love before you and me; they will always do so; why think harm of it? When I hear a preacher thunder from his pulpit against lovers, I think of a doctor who should say to a man with a bad cold: 'Don't cough; don't blow your nose.' Young folks are full of humours; they must find vent some way or other."

Whilst Fagon was attempting a difficult cure of M. de Saint-Laurent's gout, I endeavoured to acquire an influence over the mind of the Duc de Chartres, who, sick of his timorous and religious education, was delighted to emancipate himself with me. His character became, beneath my hands, plastic wax, which I moulded at my leisure. I noticed that his senses were in advance of his years, and I resolved to employ that precocious temperament for my ambitious designs. We issued abruptly from the rut in which the sub-governor had engaged us. I chose in history what was fitting to stir a young heart, to awaken new ideas in a mind of thirteen; I ceaselessly called images of pleasure before his eyes, and the name of woman came at all moments to excite his curiosity and attention; none the less, I had the prudence not to compromise myself with a child who could ruin me with a word, and I was so successful in disguising my seductions, that I won his affection without diminishing his respect. But the Arguses, who watched my

words and gestures, in order to repeat them to M. de Saint-Laurent, revived his jealousy as he learned of the empire that I was daily acquiring. From his bed he fomented hatred and led intrigues against me which I could not frustrate, except by changing for a time my system of conduct.

La Fontaine was the first to warn me of what was plotting at the sub-governor's pillow. He entered my room one day, smiling as usual; I had no suspicion that bad tidings were involved.

"Have you heard the latest scandal?" he asked.

"Good, is a new collection of *Tales* to appear?"

"No, it is not a *Tale*; Madame de La Meilleraye, who passes for the most pious prude at Court, at least in appearance, has been secretly married; guess to whom?"

"Doubtless to somebody."

"To Saint-Ruth, her page. Could you find anyone uglier or of more vulgar birth?"

"It seems there is some compensation for that slight fault, to a woman who clings to the substance."

"All these devout ladies are hard to satisfy. Madame de La Vieuville has contented herself with a child."

"Madame la Duchesse . . . ?"

"The governess. . . . I will tell you what is said about it: M. le Duc de Chartres, since the illness of M. de Saint-Laurent, runs after all the girls he meets, and we are assured that Madame, the wife of his governor, has treated him as if he had been a man; M. de La Vieuville is the only person who is ignorant, or feigns ignorance; upon my word, the lady has a beard which leads one to suspect her sex."

"How you astonish me! I can hardly believe you."

"Will you believe me if I tell you that they are going to expel you from the Palais-Royal?"

"You are jesting!"

"What do you think of it? They were speaking of it yesterday before the Duc de Vendôme, when I took your defence. It is M. de Saint-Laurent who owes you a grudge."

"But with what am I reproached?"

"A small matter; with corrupting the Prince, with lending yourself to all his caprices, and making him the prettiest young scapegrace in the world. In truth, since he has come into your hands, he has changed from head to foot; he goes to Mass less

often than to the chase; he would sooner hang on to the women's petticoats than to the robe of his confessor."

"Is it not better to make a prince of him than a monk?"

"Monsieur is not of your opinion, and if Madame did not laugh at her son's rogueries you would have had your dismissal a score of times already. I think, God forgive me, that the little rascal has taken to read my *Tales*; he recited me the whole of one yesterday."

I reminded myself that some days before I had lost a volume of these cursed *Tales*, and I understood that the Duc de Chartres must have secretly extracted it from my pocket. I was grateful to La Fontaine for his warnings, and prepared myself to disarm the treachery of M. de Saint-Laurent. The first steps I took taught me to what a degree people's minds were envenomed against me; I summoned my friends to my assistance; the Abbé Raslin persuaded M. de Vendôme to speak in my favour; the Abbé Chaulieu and the Marquis de La Fare sang my praises to Monsieur, who believed no more of them than he cared to, and answered: "I pass over the libertinage, but to lack religion, that is an unpardonable crime!"

I presented myself to Madame d'Orléans, whom I found at breakfast. She received me, as always, with German frankness, and knowing of old what a patient listener I was, regaled me with a rosary of anecdotes which were to be included in her budget for the day. She told me that M. le Duc de Guiche, married to Mademoiselle de Noailles, slept soundly the whole of his first nuptial night; that an obscene book had been found in the bed of Mademoiselle de Montmorency, maid of honour to Madame la Dauphine, and that Madame de Montchevreuil, governess of the maids of honour, was to be dismissed with all her flock. I had never seen her so intent on talking of everything. It was M. Letellier, Archbishop of Rheims, living with Madame de Bélinghen, his niece; it was the Sieur Lachaut-Montauban, brigadier of the King, and the Sieur de La Roche-sur-Buies, coming to fisticuffs in the street, although their swords hung at their sides. Finally, as a diversion to the scandalous chronicle of the day, she showed me her breakfast, which consisted of sausages, ham, and sundry German viands, salted, peppered, and saffroned.

"I cannot accustom myself," said she, "to coffee and

chocolate; you French destroy your stomachs with such drugs; even your soups give me the stomach-ache; I prefer the stews of my own country. Will you taste this *choucroute*; I have made the King himself partake of it?" They served me, and I feigned appetite to devour this infernal cookery, which burnt my throat and bowels; I came out with honour from this rough ordeal, and when I broached the reason of my visit, I saw that my gastric devotion had won me Madame's good wishes, and she did even more than she promised. Having still this terrible *choucroute* on my stomach, which afflicted me with nausea every moment, I went to my former patroness, who welcomed me with open arms as an old friend. I spared no oratorical precaution. I had put her in the best humour, when an unseasonable indigestion, which suddenly seized me, surprised me in a disorder of my dress by which the circumstances profited. Madame de Grancey covered me with perfumes, and succeeded in restoring me to a state of health which gave me time to regain my room and bed. I was confined there for several days, during which my friends pleaded my cause with Monsieur, who would have had me a thief and an assassin sooner than irreligious. When I was quite rid of the *choucroute*, I presented myself to the Chevalier de Lorraine, the favourite of Monsieur, according to the advice of Madame de Grancey, who was to announce me.

This Chevalier who was, to speak correctly, a *chevalier d'industrie*, had a hundred failings for one good quality. I understand that he was better than his reputation, and than his brother the Comte de Marsan. He robbed his master, and could not keep the money; he lied and gave his word of honour; he did not believe in God, and never missed Mass of Sundays. He harmonised these contradictions with wit and gaiety. He confessed that his love was not confined to women, and that he went to the pit of the opera to study the love of Socrates. I suspect Monsieur, notwithstanding his devoutness and his rosaries, to have encouraged these Greek manners, which concerned him more than people think. The Chevalier de Lorraine shared La Grancey with Monsieur in all good fellowship, and it was not till the end of his life that he wedded secretly Mademoiselle de Lillebonne. He had loved Mademoiselle de Fiennes, whom he left, it is said, because of a pretty dog of

which he was jealous. The Chevalier had a fine open countenance, more deceitful than himself, for it announced an honest man, and Madame de Sévigné was taken in by it. When I saw him, he was looking badly, being hardly recovered from an illness which had not damaged his figure, one of the best made at Court. I found him in conversation with Melchisedech Thévenot, who was merrily relating to him his amours at Rome, whither the King had sent him in 1654, to assist at the conclave which elected Pope Alexander VII.

"It is you, then," said the Chevalier, "in whom Madame de Grancey takes so much interest. I presume you are not ungrateful, and have given her proofs of your merit?"

"I am too conscious, Monsieur, of my little worth; do not, pray, treat a mere tutor as though he were a great lord."

I knew too well what kind of man I had to deal with not to adapt my words to his character, and I was adroit enough to drop the tone of ceremony.

"Ah, my friend," he went on with a laugh, "I am told that you have turned your Duc de Chartres into a proper rascal; Madame de La Vieuville violated him, and he never cried out for help."

"The Prince," added Thévenot, with his pinched lips, which gave him the look of a living epigram,—“the Prince knows too well the respect he owes to his governor, to care to miss any of Madame's lessons."

"Lord!" I answered ingenuously, "I vow to you that if he had followed my counsels, he would have made a better choice for his initiation."

"What do you know of it?" retorted the Chevalier. "Monsieur assures me that the bearded Duchess would instruct a young man nicely."

"Then," I interrupted, "they would be wrong in showing me the door."

"Have no fear; we take you under our protection, and Thévenot, who is very intimate with La Vieuville, will undertake to support you on his side."

"How can I prove my gratitude to you?"

"By making your Duke a ne'er-do-well like yourself, and above all by playing tricks on the Palatine!"

"Monsieur, I ask you for time to give the lie to the bad

reports that have been made to Monseigneur the Duc d'Orléans, and you will see what Dubois can do."

"Remember, that since your pupil has been made Chevalier of the King's orders, at the same time as Messieurs de Bourbon, de Conti, and Du Maine, you are teaching grammar to a prince of the blood."

"However, I am going to treat him so harshly that I intend him to complain of me to Monsieur."

"Sdeath! 'Tis an expedient beyond suspicion, and you are a cunning scoundrel to have thought of it."

The Chevalier de Lorraine and Thévenot reiterated the assurance of their services, and I began to put my irons in the fire; I had the good fortune to succeed.

The suspicions excited against me were not yet dissipated. The Abbé Renaudot and the Abbé Leblanc had orders to be present at the lessons, and often Messieurs Faure, Maucroix, and La Fontaine were sent in addition. In answer to the complacences which I was accused of showing to the Duc de Chartres, I changed my key so brutally, that in a few days he loathed me as much as he had loved me. I spared no pains to thwart him, to contradict him, and tears of anger often shone in his eyes. It was not that he respected me enough to suffer without complaining; he reviled me openly, and I then begged the persons who were present to tell Monsieur how the lesson had passed; the Prince was not frightened by my threats, and threatened me in his turn. This misunderstanding was a cause of Monsieur's return to better sentiments towards me, and he soon took my part as much as he could; for fathers have a habit of never believing the complaints that children make of their teachers. I was thus high in the favour of the Duc d'Orléans, and in the hatred of the Duc de Chartres, when M. de Saint-Laurent died opportunely.

It was on the 3rd of August 1687. I was giving my lesson in presence of the Abbé Leblanc; the Prince was reading to me a portrait of the Cardinal de Richelieu, which he had composed after my notes at the preceding lesson. But instead of representing the Cardinal as minister, whose figure in history is so great and imposing, he had taken it into his head to sketch a satirical picture resembling myself. I remember that he said, amongst other things: "Pedantic as a village schoolmaster, insolent as a stable varlet, rascal enough for six, this Abbé."

I stopped him with great composure.

"Pray, Monsieur, where have you found all these fine things?"

"Are you going to claim them as your own property?"

"I would have you observe that the Cardinal de Richelieu was an abbé neither in name nor estate."

"He was as much one as you, I imagine."

"Monsieur, if you do your tasks no better, you shall not go to the chase to-morrow."

"Very fine, Abbé, what you say is not a precept; it's a counsel perhaps."

"Monsieur," cried the Abbé Leblanc, rising, "you forget yourself; is it thus we bring up young princes!"

"Monsieur l'Abbé," I answered angrily, "what do you presume to say?"

"You have failed in respect to Monseigneur."

"I know well in what you fail!"

This sally caused the Duc de Chartres to laugh; the Abbé Leblanc grew scarlet, and went out without saying a word. I went on more calmly with the lesson, when I was sent for on the part of the sub-governor.

M. de Saint-Laurent was convalescent. I found him out of bed, sitting by the fire, wrapped in his dressing-gown; I understood that M. l'Abbé Leblanc had related his grievances to him.

"Monsieur," he said to me sharply, "you have behaved disgracefully."

"No, Monsieur," I retorted.

"I am going to inform Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans of the scandalous scene which has just occurred; you shall learn the distance there is between a rascal like yourself and a prince of the blood."

"We can learn at all ages, Monsieur."

"I will have you driven out with whips."

"Are you not afraid of retaliations?"

"Out of here, wretch, varlet!"

As I showed no sign of budging, he left his seat to throw me out. Suddenly, I saw him grow pale, totter, and fall stark upon the floor. The muscles of his face were twisted into horrible convulsions; his eyes were the colour of blood. I felt a cold sweat pour from all my limbs, and fled, fearing lest I should be

accused of having killed him; I almost overturned Félix, who was coming upstairs.

"What is the matter, Dubois?" he asked, seeing my state of confusion.

"M. de Saint-Laurent!" I answered; "he is dead!"

"Dead!" he cried, going towards the apartment I had just left. I followed him mechanically. The hapless sub-governor had ceased to breathe. Félix examined him in silence, and said: "Sudden apoplexy!" Then he added: "Now, Dubois, you are governor!"

I was not guilty. Well! these words made me shudder. My enemies, and I have many, like all great men, have said that M. de Saint-Laurent died of a colic, giving to understand by that, that I had poisoned him. It is so easy to poison folk after they are dead! The fact is that I have always had a horror of crime, although I am spotted with vices like an ermine. To say that the death of Saint-Laurent caused me great regret, would be an incredible lie; on the contrary, I thanked the destiny which served me so well, and, to utilise the occasion, solicited the place which the deceased put at my disposal. I encountered many obstacles to overcome, not the least of which was the aversion the Duc de Chartres had vowed to me. He said and did a thousand extravagances to escape from his tyrant; and I was tempted to lose courage, when the King proposed to appoint as preceptor to the Duc de Chartres, the celebrated Racine, *protégé* of Madame de Maintenon. Racine, whose wife's example had made him pious, had not occupied himself with literature for twelve years. It seems that he refused Monsieur's offers. My friends and protectors redoubled their efforts. Fortunately, Madame learned, I know not how, of my relations with Madame de Grancey, and from that moment I was included in the hatred she bore to her husband's favourite. She tried to oppose my interests, and Monsieur, who had no love for his second wife, took the ill she could say against me as a recommendation. The Chevalier de Lorraine, who saw with pleasure anyone as vicious as himself, gave himself no rest until the place was secured.

"My son," said he to me, "intrigue is thy daughter or thy mother; beware of being punished like Madaillan, who had his head cut off for having lain only with his daughter."

Whilst I was withering away in expectation, the Abbé Chaulieu

arrived from the provinces, came to see me, and urged me to ask for the abbey of Livry, vacant since the 23rd of August, through the death of the Abbé de Coulanges.

"The benefice has good revenues," he said, "and with abbeys, as with other things, it is only the first step that costs; I will do my utmost to obtain this one for you."

"With all my heart," said I; "only I am soliciting elsewhere."

"Can I be of any use to you, my dear Abbé?"

"M. de Saint-Laurent is dead."

"Good news! I will serve you warmly. I am off immediately to Fontainebleau, where the Court stays. I will speak to the King if needs be, and the abbeys will come after. Indeed, the abbey of Livry, which I looked upon with an envious eye, was given, on the 1st of November following, to the Abbé Seguier, who resigned the Bishopric of Nîmes."

Meanwhile, the Court had returned to Versailles; the works of Trianon, which had caused much illness, were coming to an end. The Abbé Chaulieu, who was tormenting the king and princes in my behalf, had begun to despair of success. The envious had spread a thousand calumnies about me, with which the ears of Louis XIV were full. Once, before all the Court, he recommenced his demand, tracing my panegyric in broad lines.

"My dear Abbé," said the King, with kindness, "you are singularly mistaken about your *protégé*; persons who know him well have assured me that he played, drank, and was fond of women."

"I do not know, Sire; but in any case it is true that if he plays he never loses, that if he drinks he is never drunk, and that if he loves women he never attaches himself."

"Truly," said the King, "that is excellent praise, and my brother will do well to reward such a clever man."

CHAPTER VII

DUBOIS SUB-GOVERNOR — BLOUIN THE MATHEMATICIAN — THE
QUARREL OF MADAME DE GRANCEY WITH MADAME DE BOUIL-
LON—NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION—THE YOUNG SAINT-SIMON
—CONFIDENCES—MADAME DE CASTELNAU AND MADAME DE
VITRY—DUBOIS UNMASKS HIMSELF TO THE YOUNG PRINCE
—THE PROMISES—THE VALETS-DE-CHAMBRE

MORE than a month had elapsed since the death of M. de Saint-Laurent, and I fulfilled the functions of sub-governor without having the title or prerogatives. I persevered, however, in my solicitations, continued my visits, and having little confidence in Court promises, which cost so little, was afraid of being outstripped by some more adroit competitor; for as soon as there is question of a place or a pension to give, you see the aspirants flock together like birds of prey upon a corpse. Besides a goodly number of abbés of all shades, several gentlemen had joined the ranks, and I was tempted "*to despair from excess of hope*," as the sonnet in the *Misanthrope* says; but I plucked up courage when Chaulieu informed me that the King had become my protector.

On the 30th of September, I was wandering gloomily in the park, when the little Abbé Coiffier d'Effiat threw himself upon my neck with an air of condolence. I thought at first of everything except good news.

"Well!" he said to me, "you are sub-governor."

"Impossible!" I cried, not daring to put faith in such good fortune.

"Your commission was signed yesterday, but . . ."

"What does your *but* signify, my dear sir?"

"Fifteen hundred francs less for yourself."

"And, consequently, fifteen hundred francs more for——"

"The Duc or the Duchesse de La Vieuville, as tribute-money, recompense—what you will."

"I understand; it is the price of a lesson given by the lady

CHAPTER VII

57

to the Duc de Chartres. They had better have chosen an opera-dancer. . . ."

"You see, we are economical."

"No matter; I thank you for having told me."

"I have done better; I think I have contributed, to the best of my little power, to your nomination. . . ."

"Thanks a thousand times," I cried; "I see the commencement of my fortune; I see myself, already, with a revenue of two hundred thousand livres at the end of my career."

Thévenot was walking in the garden with M. Blouin, brother of the Governor of Versailles; they heard this last exclamation of joy.

"Monsieur," said M. Blouin to me, "I should understand your prayer if you hoped for riches in order to enjoy them; but at the end of your career a revenue of two hundred thousand will be useless to you, unless you count on taking it away with you, which remains to be seen."

"I will wager, Monsieur, that you are a mathematician?" I replied.

I had guessed right.

Once vested in my new dignity, I went to thank all the persons who had interested themselves in my advancement, and I did not forget Madame, who received me graciously enough, reproached me with having sacrificed her to La Grancey, and related to me how that lady had come to blows with Madame de Bouillon, who had maliciously commented on the results of her amours, alleging that the Chevalier de Lorraine had to thank her for his yellow complexion and wretched health. I admired the effect of hatred, which made her entirely forget that she bore me a grudge also; and I was re-established in her good graces, until her son's marriage came to embroil us entirely.

The moment had come to change my system with my pupil, whom I was about to dispose of at my free will; I even refused a young teacher who was offered me as an assistant, and I gradually alienated Messieurs Leblanc, Renaudot, Faure, Maucroix and La Fontaine, who did not even assist any longer at my lessons. These preliminaries had been taken during the two months in which I had exercised my functions *ad interim*. When my nomination left me free to act, the field was my own. I had studied the character of the young Prince, who, without

my assisting in this reform, had shaken off the yoke of religion which M. de Saint-Laurent had imposed on him; I watched his thoughts and desires turning towards that sensuality which seemed so favourable to my projects. I had only to open out the path for him, and I was certain to see him plunge into it of his own accord. Meanwhile, he remembered the harshness which I had feigned towards him, and I realised that an explanation was necessary.

The son of the Duc de Saint-Simon came often to the Palais-Royal to play with the Duc de Chartres; his father had brought him with him to Saint-Cloud, where we were, and his visits occupied the hours of recreation. This child, who was a year younger than the Prince, was also of a less precocious temperament; it was never even overmuch developed. 'Tis he who, up to the present day, has not quitted M. le Régent; if God or the devil spare me long enough, I will pay him a long-standing debt. At the age of twelve he was greatly lacking in animation, ever grave, ever observant, talking little, listening greatly. The Duc de Chartres, on the other hand, had an incredible vivacity. One day I saw them go into the park and disappear amongst the bushes; the idea struck me to follow them and discover what great matter was the subject of their conversation. I stole noiselessly as far as the spot where they were seated on a marble bench in secret conference. They did not notice my approach.

"Do you know that Madame de La Vieuville is not beautiful?" said the little Saint-Simon; "in your place I should have preferred Madame de Grancey's eldest daughter."

"Bah!" said the Duc de Chartres, "one must begin somewhere, and I doubt whether an innocent girl would have taught me as much as La Vieuville; now I am in a position to teach others."

"It is quite time I knew as much."

"Apply to some lady who will make a pleasure of teaching you. The Maréchale de Castlenau, for instance."

"Fie! I have heard my father say, when he thought I was not listening, that she would lie with the devil if he was made man."

"Do you prefer the Maréchale de La Ferté?"

"Lord! all these Maréchales are mighty ancient! I am quite of the opinion of M. de La Feuillade, who said, speaking of the Duchesse de Vitry . . ."

"I don't know her."

"She is separated from her husband, and lives at the Conception, in the Rue Saint-Honoré, where the ambassadors go and court her."

"And what did M. de La Feuillade say?"

"That this lady was like the old ribands which are sold to foreigners when they are out of fashion in France."

This sally made me laugh, and I issued from my hiding-place with a good-humoured air, which struck the Duc de Chartres; he imagined that I was delighted at having at least found something which would bring him a reprimand from Monsieur; he thought, perhaps, I had overheard the whole conversation. His face grew red, his eyes flashed, and he looked at me haughtily.

As for Saint-Simon, he was so terrified at my apparition that he ran off helter-skelter. I had no mind to run after him.

"Pray tell me, Abbé," said the Prince, "are you my teacher or a spy upon me?"

"Neither, Monseigneur, if you will allow me," I replied; "my ambition only is to have the honour of being your servant."

I pronounced these words with so natural an accent of respect and cordial frankness, that the Prince could only consider it an irony; he waited in an uncertain silence for my explanation. I begged him to resume his seat, and sat down by his side.

"Monseigneur," said I, with the mystery befitting the overture I was about to make, "God forbid I should tyrannise over your tastes, or cause you the least pain; I have never had any other desire than that of being agreeable to you. Blame no one but M. de Saint-Laurent for the unworthy behaviour that I have allowed myself to use with you; I implore you to forgive me it; but I acted at the dictates of necessity; and I do not regret the unbecoming treatment I have dared to make you, my Prince and my master, undergo."

"Alas! Abbé," interrupted the Duc de Chartres, quite softened, "is not this but one more act in the comedy you have been playing since you came into the world?"

"It is a justification, Monseigneur, and I ask you as a favour to hear me to the end. At last I have obtained the title of sub-governor, which I had to secure by giving you pain, and I am ready to prove my zeal and devotion to you."

"And if I begged you to let me alone and take yourself off?"

"Monseigneur, I should obey!"

"Do you know, Abbé, I am tempted to take you at your word."

"No; you will not do that when you know the extent of that devotion which is yours for life and death. Your tastes, your caprices, your passions are in the order of nature, I wish you to be able to satisfy them."

"The devil! I see we shall understand one another amazingly; I have been chained up and you set me free. Dubois the governor would be a rogue I should have had turned out by my lackeys, Dubois, the man of confidence, will be worth somewhat less, and be somewhat better treated."

"Thanks to what I have been fortunate enough, through a reprehensible indiscretion, to overhear, Monseigneur, I see already what services I can render you, outside my office."

"Really, you feel strong enough to risk——"

"My life, if you require it. You have found that the greatest pleasures are not those of your age, and since nature has granted you an advance of two years of youth, I counsel you to profit by it; time lost is ever the worst employed, and I presume that Madame de La Vieuville has not excluded every other woman. . . ."

"Ah, Dubois, my dear Dubois, quite the contrary; ever since the *Tales* of M. de La Fontaine (I stole them out of your pocket) have taken the bandage from my eyes, I am full of emotions which only ask to come to light. Madame de La Vieuville (and I owe her gratitude none the less) has given me infinite desires; if I possessed a beautiful girl, white, well-made . . ."

"Tis a fruit which is not rare in Paris, and I will do my utmost to secure you one as soon as we have returned."

"But how? I never go out alone, and I have always a host of importunate people round me. What is to be done?"

"Eyes that see too far must be shut. I answer for everything; you have but to desire; I undertake not to let you languish."

"You undertake to find her, to bring her to me! My dear Abbé, wait till I am big, I will make your fortune."

The young Prince's impatience was such that, alleging some pretext, we returned on the following day to the Palais-Royal. The Duc de Chartres tormented me to fulfil my promise; he wished to make a new acquaintance that very evening. I restrained him for two days, and this time sufficed me to regain the affection which had been lost to me for a year, and I made it my

task to increase it even; I summoned Parel, my *valet-de-chambre*, who had shown some attachment to me.

"My friend," said I, handing him ten louis, "this is the first month's instalment of a pension I shall give you."

"I see that I must earn it," he answered; "tell me what I have to do."

"A little matter you shall know later; but discretion is of more importance than everything else; and if you fail in that, His Royal Highness will know how to punish you."

"If you doubt my goodwill and intelligence, do not pay me in advance."

"Sound Laurent, the first valet of M. le Duc de Chartres, and see what his capacities are. To-night I shall have need of you."

This Laurent was a prize rascal; Dubois, his comrade, who was his match in this point, had been dismissed at my request, because his name would have disgusted me with my own.

"Do you know, Abbé, I am tempted to take you at your word."

"No; you will not do that when you know the extent of that devotion which is yours for life and death. Your tastes, your caprices, your passions are in the order of nature, I wish you to be able to satisfy them."

"The devil! I see we shall understand one another amazingly; I have been chained up and you set me free. Dubois the governor would be a rogue I should have had turned out by my lackeys, Dubois, the man of confidence, will be worth somewhat less, and be somewhat better treated."

"Thanks to what I have been fortunate enough, through a reprehensible indiscretion, to overhear, Monseigneur, I see already what services I can render you, outside my office."

"Really, you feel strong enough to risk——"

"My life, if you require it. You have found that the greatest pleasures are not those of your age, and since nature has granted you an advance of two years of youth, I counsel you to profit by it; time lost is ever the worst employed, and I presume that Madame de La Vieuville has not excluded every other woman. . . ."

"Ah, Dubois, my dear Dubois, quite the contrary; ever since the *Tales* of M. de La Fontaine (I stole them out of your pocket) have taken the bandage from my eyes, I am full of emotions which only ask to come to light. Madame de La Vieuville (and I owe her gratitude none the less) has given me infinite desires; if I possessed a beautiful girl, white, well-made . . ."

"Tis a fruit which is not rare in Paris, and I will do my utmost to secure you one as soon as we have returned."

"But how? I never go out alone, and I have always a host of importunate people round me. What is to be done?"

"Eyes that see too far must be shut. I answer for everything; you have but to desire; I undertake not to let you languish."

"You undertake to find her, to bring her to me! My dear Abbé, wait till I am big, I will make your fortune."

The young Prince's impatience was such that, alleging some pretext, we returned on the following day to the Palais-Royal. The Duc de Chartres tormented me to fulfil my promise; he wished to make a new acquaintance that very evening. I restrained him for two days, and this time sufficed me to regain the affection which had been lost to me for a year, and I made it my

task to increase it even; I summoned Purel, my *valet-de-chambre*, who had shown some attachment to me.

"My friend," said I, handing him ten louis, "this is the first month's instalment of a pension I shall give you."

"I see that I must earn it," he answered; "tell me what I have to do."

"A little matter you shall know later; but discretion is of more importance than everything else; and if you fail in that, His Royal Highness will know how to punish you."

"If you doubt my goodwill and intelligence, do not pay me in advance."

"Sound Laurent, the first valet of M. le Duc de Chartres, and see what his capacities are. To-night I shall have need of you."

This Laurent was a prize rascal; Dubois, his comrade, who was his match in this point, had been dismissed at my request, because his name would have disgusted me with my own.

CHAPTER VIII

ANXIETIES AND CASES OF CONSCIENCE—THE LITTLE GATE IN
THE RUE DE RICHELIEU—THE FIFTY THOUSAND CROWNS—
THE INGÉNUÉ—THE DUC LOUIS DE BOURBON—MONSIEUR
TOTAL—THE FIRE AND THE ESCAPE—THE DINNER OF M.
DE LOUVOIS—M. DE COULANGES AND MADEMOISELLE DE
SERRE—THE DUC DE CHARTRES' ACQUIREMENTS

I DREAMT all day of the delicate morsel I was to procure that same evening for the Duc de Chartres, and, to tell the truth, was mightily puzzled how to find what I required. The Prince's health was confided to me, and I had not time enough for a preliminary investigation. One had to commend oneself to Providence, and judge folks by appearances, a method that often results in mistakes. I was tempted, at times, to provision myself from certain houses, which I frequented with confidence; but this was to seek for accidents at the fountain-head, and it seemed to me more prudent to trust to chance. I might have thought, of course, of going directly to some Court lady, known for her dissipated conduct; but, apart from there being even less security in such a quarter, I should have exposed myself to a dangerous rivalry; for I know none so virtuous as to refuse to become the mistress of a prince of the blood. Now a mistress has, ordinarily, more power than a governor, however accommodating he may be. I resolved, therefore, to follow my first plan, as the least hazardous.

In the evening, Parel brought Laurent to me; he was disposed to serve me. These varlets had guessed what was in question, and I saw them smile.

"My sons," I said to them, "there is gold here for you to win, or else, a whipping, or better still; if you took it into your heads to betray us, M. le Duc de Chartres would punish you in princely fashion, and ten years of the Bastille would not see the end of it. Your offices may possibly be augmented as your pension has been; but for the moment I require nothing but inviolate secrecy and all the prudence of which you are capable. The Prince depends

CHAPTER VIII

upon you. To-night, about ten o'clock, you will open the little door in the Rue de Richelieu, one of you will keep watch upon the stairs, the other in my room, through which everyone must pass in order to reach that of His Highness, who will receive nobody. In the event of Monsieur coming, find some means of preventing him from entering; the door, moreover, must be securely fastened."

After these preliminary instructions, I paid Laurent, as I had Parel, and reviewed my forces.

"Is it for to-night, Abbé," asked the Prince familiarly, as he entered in the most gallant *négligé*. "At what o'clock will the lady of my thoughts be here? Is she fair or dark, tall or short? Has she a small foot?"

"These are questions, Monseigneur, which she will answer better than I; let it alone, and you will be pleased with Dubois, your purveyor in ordinary."

"But where is she?"

"Not here, it seems, for you would have discovered her, even were she hidden. . . ."

"In your pocket, do you mean? Accursed Abbé, you make me languish thus, in order to heighten my desires. Tell me, how do you like this coat I have had made?"

"Almost worthy of you—that is to say, charming. But to talk of business."

"At another time."

"No, if it please your Highness; you see what reproaches I am exposing myself to for your sake; if the fine governor's part I am playing be discovered I run the risk of prison."

"To tell the truth, you will have earned it."

"I beg you to be so good as to take the whole responsibility on yourself; that will give me incredible courage, and every night may resemble this one."

"You want your salary, child; I am too much the Prince to haggle with you; I abandon to you all the little profits you may make by the management of my purse."

"Monseigneur, I should not have waited for your permission."

"Rascal, I will sign a promise to pay you fifty thousand crowns on my majority."

"Here is a pen to hand, ink and paper; I have never doubted but that your Highness knew how to write."

"Now, I swear to you, to take upon myself any consequences that may arise in this world."

"I charge myself with the consequences in the other, and shall feel none the worse for that. Monseigneur, I hope to present my bill when it falls due; in the meantime, I go about my work."

"Take care you do not return alone; what shall I read in the interval?"

"The poems of Madame de La Suze, or Benserade's rondeaux."

"To the devil with all such insipid trash! I am not a lover of the idyllic, and the *Tales* of La Fontaine will prepare me for all."

"God and Love grant it," said I.

I made a toilette which I had prepared for this occasion. It was an entirely stone-coloured suit, and I had also the absence of the moon to favour my incognito. I had pushed the door behind me, and, hidden in the recess of a shop, I waited, and waited long. Several companies of the watch passed without perceiving me; some drunken men jostled me as they staggered along, but I did not see the shadow of a petticoat. I had made a mistake in the hour; the *grisettes* went back to their homes at eight o'clock: 'tis an important detail in the profession I was adopting, a detail I learned subsequently from the faithful Laurent. We were in the month of October, the coolness of the night sent a shiver through me, and the thickening fog promised me a catarrh of the first quality on the morrow. In the distance I heard cries, and methought I recognised a woman's voice. Her steps drew near, and I distinguished a white form a short distance off. I was quick to make a reconnaissance, at the risk of finding myself cumbered with a face as hideous as the seven mortal sins, supposing the seven mortal sins to be all hideous, a fact which I deny.

"Mademoiselle," said I, stopping her abruptly, "what is the matter with you?" She thought I was a foot-pad bespeaking her purse, and uttered cries which did not disconcert me. "Lord!" I protested, "you are mistaken as to my intentions, which are honest and charitable; I heard you cry out, and I have come to know if it is in my power to console you."

"Alas! Monsieur," she replied. And this *alas* was her only answer; but she accented it in so soft a voice, that I was charmed with my discovery before I had seen it.

"Mademoiselle," I continued, "at this hour you run some

risk in the streets; and if the business which has brought you out so late cannot be put off, permit me to protect you with my company."

"I am sore afraid, Monsieur, that I must pass the night on the pavement; I have no shelter, and I am going where God wills."

"No; I will not abandon you in such a cruel situation, and I offer you my house, where you can remain till day."

I replied myself to this proposition of mine, and pushed her, almost without resistance, on to the staircase, the door of which I shut with precaution. I said to myself, if I have made a mistake, I will send my duchess to lie with Laurent or Purel. Chance served better than I had hoped. Laurent came to meet us with a light. I stopped in ecstasy at the sight of this angelic creature; her blue eyes, stained with tears, had a touching grace; her fresh mouth, her divine figure, even the disorder of her hair—all was made expressly for the Duc de Chartres, who was devoured with impatience.

"Mademoiselle," said I, "have the goodness to follow me; there is someone who will be enchanted to see you."

She blushed, and restrained her tears, when she had remarked the richness of my liveries, and the luxury of the apartments I led her through.

The Prince, on perceiving her, leapt to her neck as if she had been an old acquaintance; and this commencement of a good understanding which was established between them, seemed to me a good omen both for her and for me.

"My dear Dubois," said my pupil to me, "you serve me royally."

"If the King heard you," I replied, "he would be mightily flattered: his Maintenon is no longer sixteen."

The little lady began to laugh, and I saw that in thinking to have snared an *ingénue*, I had fallen upon a trained bird. I was not displeased at this, since the Prince appeared satisfied. Her name was Rose, and she wove a most proper story for us, which proved to me also that she was marvellously endowed with the talent of conversation, so precious in the interludes of love. The eyes of the young Duke devoured her. But I had been kicking my heels long enough to feel the need of recruiting my belly. A collation was served, at which I assisted, and the

princess showed us that she had an appetite of the best equipment. After having wasted another hour in gossip and laughter, I obeyed a glance of Monseigneur, withdrew to my chamber, and slept until the morning.

At an early hour I entered the apartment of the Duc de Chartres, who was awake; the little one had already risen with a complexion more blooming than the night before. I told her to prepare for departure; and having embraced the Prince, whom she did not know, she took once more the road to the little door. She showed me the *rouleau* of a hundred louis which *the child* (it was thus she designated the Duc de Chartres) had slipped into her hand, begging her to return the same night. I claimed myself the right of a commission, and kissed a mouth which did not turn away. We parted good friends, and for some days I awaited the *ingénue*; but she never returned. I have since learned that the Abbé Bodeau had stolen her from us for the harem of the fat Louvois. The Prince was distressed at not seeing her, then consoled himself, and begged me to find him a new creature. The confidences he made to me completed my conviction that Rose was a virtue mighty well broken in.

The Duc de Chartres said to me one day: "My cousin, Monsieur de Duc, has been following in my footsteps; only he neglected to hide his game, and the King is much incensed with him and his tutor."

"Who told you this, Monseigneur?"

"This letter from Louis de Bourbon, at Fontainebleau, where the Court has returned. His father, Monsieur le Prince, fell from his horse while hunting, but was luckier than M. de Villeroy, who broke his arm in two places. The governor of M. le Duc, being less under supervision owing to this accident, took to play."

"Who is this governor?"

"M. Bellegarde de Saintrailles, who has nothing in common with Xaintrailles de Pottron, under Charles VII. In short, whilst this little gentleman was losing all his money at hazard, his pupil was ruining himself on the other side. M. le Duc got into a hackney-coach with his friends—Chemerault, the Marquis de Bellefonds, Château-Regnault, and the little Broglie; he took them to Paris, to Madame Chevalier's, notorious, it is said, for the profession she exercises; and the Lord knows the pretty

debauch they laid to the account of their conscience! The King, having heard of this exemplary conduct, wanted to banish the accomplices of M. le Duc, who was generous enough to take all the blame to himself."

"And the governor?"

"He keeps his place, and the King told M. le Prince that he was astonished to see a man of his kind in his carriage. It seems that the nobility of M. de Saintrailles is not of ancient origin. M. le Prince answered that the Chevaliers de Rivière, the Lussans, and the Briords enjoyed the like qualification. The King shut his mouth, saying that there was a great difference between these gentlemen and that lout."

"Do you think, Monseigneur, that the Dubois are any more noble than the Saintrailles?"

"I care very little about it; but I know they are cleverer and greater rogues."

It was the occasion to present my account, with which anyone but a prince would have been but indifferently suited; it was entitled: "*Part of the payments made by me for Monseigneur Total*"; and it amounted to a hundred louis, expended *in silence, collation, et cætera*, the whole relative to Mademoiselle Rose. The Prince, who was quite expert in calculations, was mindful of his signature, and accepted the conditions of Monseigneur Total. He paid and burned the bill. Since that day I have never drawn up my private accounts more exactly. The Duc de Chartres did not haggle with a servant as devoted as I was. He asked me anew, and I hastened to satisfy him. The result was again favourable to me.

One evening when, from the threshold of the *Gate of Love*, as we had baptised it, I was watching all that passed in the Rue de Richelieu, my gaze wandered to the house which faced me; through the panes, that the light from within lit up, I made out a young girl, who was ready to retire to rest. I followed all her movements with an invincible curiosity; and although her features could not be distinguished, I formed the most agreeable images of them. It was with genuine displeasure that I saw the lamp extinguished, and I was already putting off to the morrow the inquiries I meant to make about her, when a smell of smoke made me conceive hopes. I was not long in perceiving that the fire was in the house inhabited by my sleeper. I called Laurent

and Purl; I gave them hurried instructions, and we began to cry "Fire!" and break in the house door. Before the Capucins had run up with their buckets and pumps, the two valets had entered the house, spreading the alarm, and seeking the object of my interest. Laurent penetrated into a room in flames, and the sight of a woman's clothing induced him to seize in his arms her whom he found lying half suffocated on the bed. I saw him arrive proudly with his prey, and I was about to introduce him into the Palace, when Purl, loaded with a similar burden, threw me into singular embarrassment. However, by the light of the fire, which was making progress, I thought myself able to make a choice, and I made a sign to Purl to bring in the swooning woman he carried. Hardly was my capture in surety, when I rid Laurent of his. She was an old woman, whom at the first glance I thought must be the mother; I left her in the hands of the good people who had come to her assistance, and regained my little door, which I closed prudently; whilst the Capucins threw water, and the loungers gazed at the fire. Purl had deposited the unconscious young girl in the Prince's chamber; the Duc de Chartres had got on so well that, when I returned, she had come to her senses again. She paid no attention to me; my attire gave me the air of a servant. I noticed with joy that she was even lovelier than I had imagined. The Prince kissed her hands, which she did not withdraw; she wept and asked for her mother; we swore that her mother had been saved, and that she would see her next day. She was so innocent that she believed anything we wished, and the Prince wished more than she thought for. She lost her timid airs, and gave way to such mad gaiety that I went away to bed, to give them leisure to do likewise. This they did not fail to do; and on the morrow I found the little person livelier, merrier than ever; she had forgotten her mother, and would hear no more talk of departure. The Duc de Chartres kept her for several days, hidden in a wardrobe, where he fed her with confections; and I was obliged to restore her forcibly to her mother, who was seeking her all over Paris. The poor woman was overjoyed to recover her daughter; but, having a suspicion of what had happened, without knowing where, she hastened prudently to find her a husband who should take the responsibility of the past and future.

I should never finish, if I were to pause at each novelty I

procured for the Duc de Chartres. As I feared lest he should come to attach himself to some passion which might damage the influence I exercised over him, I arranged it in such fashion that the *grisettes* passed no more than one night at the Palais-Royal. The Prince listened to reason when I represented to him that the success of his amours depended on this measure. He retired about eight o'clock to his apartment, under pretext of working, and the amazing amount of information he had acquired, gave plausibility to this studious withdrawal. I descended into the Rue de Richelieu, and lay in ambuscade, passing in review embroideresses, milliners, washerwomen, sempstresses, and all the *grisettes* who issued from the shops. I rarely returned alone; and I venture to say, in praise of the exquisite tact I possessed, that the Prince never repented of the conquests I made for him in the street. At midnight the young girl received a few louis, and was escorted back, by Laurent or Purl, to the spot whence I had taken her. In this manner, the conduct of the Prince was safe from all suspicion; none of the initiated suspected that the little door and secluded staircase belonged to the Palais-Royal. In order to dispel even indiscreet observations, which the sumptuous character of the apartments might have excited, I persuaded the Prince to establish the temple of his pleasures in a little closet, very simply furnished, which was nearer the staircase. The Duc de Chartres had not yet gone in search of amours outside the Palais-Royal. He was dining one day with M. de Louvois; conversation arose about the new postal law, which forbade the carriage of any other object than letters.

"I know a lady," said the minister, "who will suffer from this decree; I have a packet here, addressed to her from Bordeaux, where I am told she has a lover."

"Monsieur," cried M. de Coulanges, whose words were more gallant than his actions, "it would be good of you to forward her these trifles, so pleasing to a tender heart."

After dinner the box was brought in, untied, and in the midst of an immense quantity of rose-leaves we found a man's portrait, which gave no bad opinion of the original.

"Coulanges," said M. de Louvois, "I will give you that. Do the honours of it to the lady, and prove her gratitude."

The lady was Mademoiselle de Serre, living in the Rue de Condé. Coulanges carried off the portrait, and on the following

day sent it to its address by a lackey, with a letter couched in rhyme and prose. He thereby escaped the consequences of his politeness, being, as I said, very rich in madrigals, but very poor in other respects. The Duc de Chartres would have greatly liked to undertake the restitution, but he dared not suggest it; only he informed himself of the results of Coulanges' mission, and learning that the latter had not ventured in person, the idea came to him to take advantage of the opportunity which the poet had let slip. He had heard that Mademoiselle de Serre's beauty and wit were worth all that one could do for her. I occupied myself grudgingly with this intrigue, which began in a more serious manner than I could have wished. I presented myself before this lady, who had received Coulanges' letter with more pleasure than his enclosure. The portrait had not revived a love already extinguished in her heart, and which she was in haste to rekindle for some other object who was not a picture; she would have embraced me when I informed her that I was in the service of M. de Coulanges, and my abbé's dress did not prevent her from overwhelming me with questions, which I answered to my pupil's advantage. She handed me a letter which she had prepared, and the Duc de Chartres replied to it in person. He had forbidden me to accompany him, and the time he remained with the young lady left me in no anxiety as to the issue of his *liaison*. He returned very late, and, as he repeated the same proceedings for several days, I feared I had found my master. It was nothing of the kind: Mademoiselle de Serre, pretty as she was, had not the wherewithal to fix the most inconstant character in existence; she did not even make the endeavour, and I was soon pleased to see the Prince discontinue his visits. M. de Coulanges, who only appeared in this affair in order to furnish the Prince with the means of succeeding, had, none the less, all the honour of it, which his conceit was not loath to accept; the Duc de Chartres himself joked him about his relations with the unknown of the Rue de Condé. He defended himself but faintly, as though he would fain have the thing believed; he played admirably the part of the man of *bonnes fortunes*. These ephemeral loves had no influence upon the Prince's studies and progress; I had nothing more to teach him, and I studied with him in order to excite his emulation. His mind had an admirable dexterity; he succeeded in all that

he undertook; his memory was marvellous, his judgment prompt and just, his taste exquisite. With these qualities, he really surpassed me, and my empire acquired fresh roots daily in the friendship he bore me. He wrote verses better than a professed poet, and his talent for painting is signalised by the pictures of Daphnis and Chloe with which he adorned the cabinet of Madame d'Orléans. He composed the words and music of several operas, which were performed in his palace; sculpture and architecture were not strange to him; he had a most extended knowledge of history, medicine, and geography. But the science which he practised with love was chemistry, and he still occupies himself with it to-day; he made me acquire a taste for it, and we passed nights in the midst of furnaces and alembics. For myself, naturally incredulous, I saw in these operations only learned combinations of the human mind; I sought only for the nature of things. The Prince was beset by a prejudice which my sarcasms could not shake: imbued with the principles of the *demonomania* of Bodin, he imagined understandings with spirits which have no existence, and dreamt of the philosopher's stone. I do not think he has found it.

CHAPTER IX

DUBOIS AT COURT—BEAUTY OF LOUIS XIV—HIS UNCLEANLINESS—HIS GLUTTONY—THE PRIVATE COVER—HIS LOVE OF ETIQUETTE—THE THRASHING AT MARLY—PETTY TYRANNIES—THE KING'S SELFISHNESS—HIS JOURNEYS—PREDICAMENT OF THE DUCHESSE DE CHEVREUSE AND CHIVALRY OF THE DUC DE BEAUVILLIERS—THE SUFFERINGS OF MADAME DE MAINTENON—THE KING'S MISTRESSES—MADAME HENRIETTE OF ENGLAND, MONSIEUR'S FIRST WIFE—MADAME'S DEATH BY POISON—PURNON FIRST MAJOR-DOMO OF MONSIEUR'S HOTEL—HIS REVELATIONS—RECALL OF THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE

IN my quality as sub-governor of the Duc de Chartres, I soon had my entry to Court. My cloth was already a good recommendation, under the rule of Madame de Maintenon, which was that of the Church. But, thank God, I was not the only one to whom, in that devout Court, the old proverb was applicable: "It is not the cowl that makes the monk."

It has been loudly asserted, in order that he might hear it, no doubt, that the King was the most handsome man in his kingdom. Why not in the world and of his century? Flatterers are not the folk to take alarm at so little. In respect of beauty I could cite a goodly number of persons who yielded in nothing to Louis XIV; the Chevalier de Lorraine, who caused Benserade to say: "I am only consoled for not being M. d'Armagnac, because I am not M. de Saint-Hérem, Racine, the Duc de Richelieu, and so many others. However, I know few who actually surpass him in good looks. When one saw him for the first time, one could hardly avoid being dazzled. Ambassadors who were not accustomed to sustain his gaze, have often stopped short in their harangues. In his walk, his speech, his countenance, in his whole person, there was an air of grandeur, a noble and imposing character, which came from the opinion he had formed of an absolute king, like the Olympian Jupiter shaking the universe

with his frown. His face was correctly beautiful, in spite of his age; and his mouth, opened frequently, as if to show his teeth, had not that foolish expression which such a habit often lends to the physiognomy. One would have believed he was always on the point of speaking, and this gave the more value to his rare words, measured and weighed in the balance. Pretty feet and handsome legs are advantages not to be despised; and the King, who was very proud of his, showed them off by the elegance of his shoes and the tightness of his small clothes. His figure had been admirable; but the flesh which he put on in his devout days was beginning to mar the perfection of his contours. He became even too fat; and, as Monsieur was tall, the fat gave rise to the following jest: 'There has been a mistake made either by the father or the mother; one of the two brothers has received what was destined for the other.'

"I hope at least," said Madame de Maintenon, "that there is no allusion to religion."

He was not very careful about his adornment, but although his inward man was of an incredible uncleanness, it did not appear upon his person. Monsieur had the same habits; it was a relic of their neglected childhood, when they were abandoned to the care of valets. The King thought nothing of keeping some fine greyhounds in his bed-chamber, which he liked to feed with his own hand; their excrement soiled the floor and furniture, without his taking notice of such disagreeables; he had always ten or twelve of them distributed about his cabinets, which resembled stables more than anything else.

Louis XIV, like his brother and his sons, was a rude eater—a glutton rather than an epicure; Gargantua might have been jealous of him: that is why the state dinner was extremely rare. He dined alone in his room, at a square table facing the window; he ordered in the morning a very small cover, always composed of a great number of dishes, and three courses besides dessert. Ordinarily, but few people were present during the dinner; and I have several times assisted at it with the Duc de Chartres, who remained standing, according to the etiquette, to which Monsieur, Monseigneur, and the Princes also conformed. The King maintained a well-employed silence; for I have seen him eat, at one meal, four plates of soup, a whole pheasant, a partridge, two salads, some roast mutton and garlic, two large slices of ham,

pastry, fruit, and confections. He never drank wine but mixed with water, and with sobriety. The high-chamberlain, or, in his absence, the first gentleman of the chamber, served the King, who made a disagreeable noise with his tongue and teeth while he ate. His greatest delight was hard-boiled eggs.

He had a mania for etiquette, which descended to the minutest things, and subjected the Court to a brilliant slavery. They relate many incidents, which have been confirmed to me by eye-witnesses, and which are not to the honour of the gentleness and urbanity people have been pleased to ascribe to him. On rising from a state dinner at Marly, he observed a valet, who, whilst clearing the table, picked up a biscuit and put it in his pocket. At the same moment, his cane and hat were brought to him, and, in sight of the ladies and gentlemen, whom he hustled to right and left to make a passage for him, he threw himself on the gluttonous thief, abused him, struck him, and broke the stick over his shoulders.

"It was only a twig," he said, as a form of excuse for his brutality.

The amusing side of this adventure is that the King, who held oaths in horror, so much so that he punished them in others severely, gave vent to those of every hue on this occasion. I imagine that the Père La Chaise did not let him want absolution.

The King derived pleasure from a thousand petty tyrannies, which seem to me far beneath the dignity of a great monarch. He was vexed to see that the ladies of the Court did not put on full dress for the play. Two words from him put toilettes in the fashion, and soon its omission was no longer permitted at gatherings where he was present. All this passed before I had been presented, for Madame de Maintenon had changed diversions for matters of religion. The horizon of the Court had grown sombre, and elegance of manners, gallantry, and merry-making were gone.

No one has ever defended the selfishness which was a second nature with Louis XIV. This selfishness, which ruling had developed, was apparent in his least actions. I know nothing which reveals it more than his journeys. His carriage was encumbered with women, his mistresses or his bastards; he needed bosoms and petticoats to look at. Sometimes Madame, whose German outbursts amused him when in a good temper, had a

place in the carriage, in which Madame la Duchesse de Chevreuse was always established. But what torments the victims of the King's choice endured without complaining! As he liked air, he kept the windows lowered, and would not agree to have the curtain drawn to keep off sun, wind, rain, or cold. The ladies, abandoned to all the excesses of the season, thought themselves fortunate when the dust did not devour them. This was not all. The King, who took pleasure in seeing people eat with a good appetite, was careful to furnish his carriage with meat, fruit, and pastry; every moment he would invite his travelling companions to do honour to his provisions, and those who were not hungry, or who ate reluctantly, incurred his disgrace, and often mighty bitter words. Unfortunately, stomachs and bowels revolted against this treatment; a host of inconveniences resulted from this, which might have roused a laugh in any other society.

Madame de Chevreuse related that, on a journey to Fontainebleau, she was seized with a colic, which was intensified by the dinner, the constraint, and two hours' travelling; she could hardly put her foot to the ground without an accident. When the carriage arrived at its destination, she had barely time to implore the Duc de Beauvilliers to accompany her. They crossed the courtyard to the chapel, where a low mass was being said; the door was open, and the fair traveller deposited her burden, whilst the worthy duke made her a stout rampart with his body. Those who came afterwards did not suspect that a duchess had passed by. As for the King, if he found himself in a similar critical position, he did not even take the precaution of the Duc de Beauvilliers; he was contented to descend from his carriage, but the ladies were not compelled to look.

Madame de Maintenon had much to suffer from the egoist. Sick or well, and ladies are not always in the latter condition, she had to follow the King wherever he went, and it was partly to this painful exactitude that she owed her high fortune. She had finished by obtaining leave to travel separately, under pretext of modesty; but she never found a pretext for escaping from what the King desired of her at his ordinary hours. Louis XIV, who was genuinely attached to her, was not concerned for her health so long as he was satisfied. He could not dispense with air, and when he entered Madame de Maintenon's chamber, had she the fever even, he began by opening all the windows until ten

o'clock at night; he never inquired even whether the freshness of the night incommoded her; it was not his business, since he himself felt well. Madame de Maintenon endured all in silence. *Such is our good pleasure*, was the device of Louis XIV.

He was doubly fond of women, from caprice and from temperament; his gallantry was less set upon amorous preliminaries than on the rest. He was not satisfied if he did not come at once to the end of a passion which lasted as long as it could. When nature spoke, he showed no daintiness; anything was food to him, provided it was a woman—peasants, servants, ladies of quality, and a thousand others. He had only the embarrassment of choosing; they threw themselves at his head, and he did not take as much as was offered him. In spite of his daily passions, he had certain serious ones which subjugated him for years. He let himself be loved (according to the expression of Madame de Cornuel, so prodigal of epigrams) by Mademoiselle de La Vallière, who loved him with heart-felt devotion; by Madame de Montespan, who loved him from ambition; by Madame de Soubise from interest; and by Madame de Maintenon from a mixture of both motives.

The King's love for Madame Henriette, Monsieur's first wife, had a strange pretext, which betrays the Jesuit a league off. He pretended that if his brother had spare time, he would win the affection of the Court and town, and that thus, by exciting his jealousy, he was providing him with occupation; this was to cover adultery with reasons of state. Monsieur, philosophical as he was in his tastes, had the mania of disapproving those of his wife. Monsieur made no scruple of sacrificing Madame to the Chevalier de Lorraine, and was astonished that she made up with others for the neglect in which he left her. The Comte de Guiche and the Duke of Monmouth had not a long reign. That of Louis XIV, in which love was blended with politics, lasted until Madame's death, without prejudice to the passing gallantries she never denied herself. However, ashamed at the morals of Monsieur, who was reviving the mignons of Henri III, she resolved to banish the Chevalier de Lorraine, who had said audaciously: "Ladies, imitate us on your side, and the world will come to an end."

She asked for the exile of this perverse one, and the King hastened to grant it her. Monsieur wept, begged, implored,

swooned; the King was inflexible. The Chevalier departed to Italy, which seemed a country expressly made for him.

Madame, without being beautiful, had that grace which my friend, La Fontaine, calls fairer than beauty. She was young, lively, and fresh; her wit was a further seduction; and, as her virtue was not on the most solid of foundations, it was a question as to who should have his share. The King ended by loving her tenderly; he confided the most important secrets of the government to her, thought highly of her counsels, and even sent her to England to treat of the interests of the two kingdoms. Monsieur, jealous of this favour, said: "I should not be surprised if my wife were made a minister of France."

Meanwhile, Beuvron and the Marquis d'Effiat, particular friends of the Chevalier de Lorraine, suffered his absence impatiently; it seemed as though it would not cease until the death of Madame. It was for this they busied themselves. The Chevalier sent a poison from Italy. We know that in that country the use of poison is as common as that of bread. D'Effiat undertook to utilise it.

Madame was then at Saint-Cloud, to pass the time of the summer heat. Her physicians had ordered her chicory-water to cool the ardour of the blood. She drank but one glass morning and evening. A porcelain pot, containing the chicory-water, was kept in a cupboard in a little vestibule of Madame's apartment; by the side of the pot was the cup, which was used by Madame only. With diabolic invention, d'Effiat seized the moment when no one saw him to steal into the passage, open the cupboard, take the cup and rub its sides with a paper. A *valet-de-chambre* came in and surprised d'Effiat during this operation.

"What are you doing there, Monsieur?" he asked, "and why are you touching Madame's cup?"

"My friend," answered d'Effiat, showing no confusion, "I was very thirsty, I wished to drink, and, as this cup seemed to me dirty, I was wiping it with paper, having no serviette."

The valet was satisfied with this excuse, put the cup back in its place, and poured out some drink in another. D'Effiat having drunk, withdrew. In the afternoon Madame had her cup full of chicory-water brought her.

"I am poisoned," she said, handing it back empty to some-

one, who upset it to remove the traces of poison. "Help! I am dead!"

"Madame, is it possible?" cried d'Effiat; "do not make such a terrible mistake."

He asked for the pot of chicory-water, which he tasted, saying: "You see, gentlemen."

Those who were present, encouraged by this example, imitated him.

However, Madame's pains increased each moment. She threw herself on her bed with cries and fearful contortions. The physicians hurried in; their art was spent in conjectures, then in useless remedies. They lost much time, examined the chicory-water and the cup, which was in the cupboard, clean and purified. The sickness grew worse. Madame received the last sacraments, and at about three o'clock of the morning, expired, burnt internally as though with red-hot pincers.¹

Monsieur put on a fine countenance of affliction. The King, who was in bed, rose at this terrible news, sent for Brissac, Captain of the Guards, and ordered him to bring Purnon, the first major-domo of Madame, before him, suspecting him, on more grounds than one, to be at any rate in the secret. This Purnon, a friend of the Chevalier de Lorraine and the Marquis d'Effiat since their childhood, possessed wit, but even more malignity than wit. He was a man without faith or law, a thief and a liar, an atheist, and a man of bad morals. At the moment of his death he sent God and his confessor to all the devils. "My good man," said he, "leave this carcase; it smells ill already, and the prettiest boy in the world could not revive it." He was brought into the King's chamber, bound hand and foot. He thought it was all over with him; but Louis XIV had dried his tears, and, with a face inflamed with anger, commanded them to leave him alone with Purnon, who was more dead than alive.

"Wretched man," he cried, "tell the truth, and I promise to spare your life; if not, you are lost. Has Madame been poisoned?"

"Yes, Sire," answered Purnon, trembling in every limb.

"Since you are aware of the crime, you should know its author."

¹ This anecdote is confirmed by the correspondence of Madame.—[Editor.]

"Sire, the Chevalier de Lorraine sent me the poison from Italy in a case of oranges. I gave it to d'Effiat, who made use of it."

"And my brother," went on the King after a moment's silence, with a sombre look, "did he know of all this?"

"No, Sire."

"Remember that your life or death depends on the answer to this question. Did he know it?"

"Sire, I swear to you he did not. D'Effiat wrote to the Chevalier de Lorraine that Monsieur, irritated at Madame's gallantries, would perhaps be relieved if she was done away with by some means or other; but the Chevalier answered by letter that care must be taken to say nothing to Monsieur, who would not be able to hold his tongue, and that if he did not speak for the first year, he would get us hanged ten years later."

"Ah," replied the King, carrying his hand to his eyes, "I am relieved; you will retire."

Brissac escorted Purnon back in liberty, and, strange to relate, the matter rested there. Certain suspicions were secretly circulated. D'Effiat and Beuvron were not molested, and Purnon did not sell his post as Monsieur's major-domo until long afterwards. I presume that the King arrested the course of justice, because he feared lest Madame's gallantries should be revealed, and trouble his brother's peace. Monsieur was made to believe that the Dutch had administered to Madame a slow poison, which had not produced an effect until her return to France. Nevertheless, the Chevalier de Lorraine was recalled, and the welcome he received from Monsieur enabled people to believe what they liked.

During the Queen's lifetime, the King never once failed to sleep in her bed; only he slept there with a profound slumber, and the Queen, whose Spanish temperament was not accustomed to such manners, could perceive that he had been fatigued elsewhere. She uttered gentle reproaches to him, to which he had nothing to reply, except that the profession of a king was a hard one. In other respects, Louis XIV showed her consideration in lieu of love, and caused her to be respected; for he loved her, he said, on account of her virtues. Every day, however, after dinner, he visited his mistresses, and lay with them, when the fancy seized him. He thus prepared himself to sleep all

the following night. Madame de Montespan had encouraged him in this habit, and, as then he did not sleep, their conversation touched upon a thousand matters—politics and affairs of state being especially in question.

During the lifetime of the Queen, Louis XIV had time to grow weary of mistresses who offered him no more than beauty and pleasure. Madame de Montespan, with her indomitable pride, her passion for governing all things, finished by disgusting him with these illegitimate connexions which caused him so many vexations. It was she who presented Madame de Maintenon to her lover, not suspecting that this woman, less beautiful and older than herself, would become a dangerous and preferred rival. The widow of Scarron showed a master-mind in the conduct of this intrigue. The King, who at first could not endure the sight of her, finished by finding her indispensable. The Queen had said on her deathbed: "I pray God that the King will separate from the Montespan, with whom he is damning his soul."

I shall not be persuaded that these words were not inspired by the Père La Chaise, the interested confidant of Madame de Maintenon. Louis XIV, who looked upon them as the warning of heaven, made them serve as an excuse for the antipathy he began to conceive towards the Montespan. The latter, who has been accused of poisoning Mademoiselle de Fontanges, and others, was not behindhand in malevolence. She conceived the plan of sending the King, from Italy, an horoscope, foretelling that, towards the end of his life, he would love an old strumpet. The terms were even more bitter, and Madame de Maintenon wittily turned them against her rival. The laughs were on her side. It was at this epoch that Madame de Montespan rang the knell of her defeat by retiring; and, as though she too wished to profit by the Maintenon's lessons, she threw herself into religion, like La Vallière, under the pretext that she would sooner love God than nobody. The King, on his return from Versailles, found Madame de Maintenon more subtle and more devout than ever; he let himself be caught by her prudery, and ended the comedy by marrying this old, kept woman, all out of penitence.

Many people believe, even to-day, that this marriage is a mere fable, invented by the friends of the Maintenon; but

Montchevreuil, who was a witness of it, has related to me all the particulars. Madame de Maintenon, whilst passing from hand to hand, had retained an appetising plumpness, by which the King, ravenous after an abstinence of several months, let himself be tempted. But whatever efforts he made against the lady's virtue they were only met with refusals, which made the stings of the flesh acuter. Madame de Maintenon overthrew his scruples with the Bible and the four evangelists; the Père La Chaise *jesuitised* to his utmost; Villarceaux, who knew the particulars of the widow's charms, inflamed the King's imagination with them; M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, played his part in the comedy, whose Scapin was Bontemps, Governor of Versailles, *valet-de-chambre* and procuror, won over at the cost of money and promises; Madame de Maintenon gained the Marquis de Louvois to her party by first admitting him to her bed. Finally, in mid-winter, on a starless night—as though it were in mourning for this incongruous union—Bontemps went to fetch the bride, and conducted her to one of the King's closets, in which were assembled Louis XIV, the Père La Chaise, M. de Harlay, Louvois, and Montchevreuil. An altar had been prepared; the dimly-lit apartment did not allow perception of all that was depicted on those silent faces; the King wore an air of gloom, and, happening to raise his eyes to a portrait of the dead Queen, which they had forgotten to remove, he lowered them, full of tears; the Maintenon, on the other hand, advanced with a triumphal air, which was shared by her creatures. Mass was said by the King's confessor, and served by Bontemps. When the Père La Chaise asked Madame de Maintenon if she consented to take His Majesty for her husband, she interrupted him with a *yes*, uttered in a clear and ringing voice; before replying to a like question, Louis XIV hesitated for a few moments, and no one heard the ashamed *yes* he murmured. The ceremony being completed, they passed the night together. Louvois whispered in the bride's ear:

"My cousin, I see you Queen of France!"

"Not yet," she replied.

The report of this secret marriage was not slow to transpire at Court, and Madame de Maintenon did nothing to refute it.

CHAPTER X

DEATH OF THE DUC DE LA VIEUVILLE—THE NEW GOVERNOR—
 MADEMOISELLE, DUCHESSE DE MONTPENSIER—THE CAR-
 MELITES OF THE RUE BOULOY—ILLNESS OF MADEMOISELLE—
 THE KING'S ANGER—THE DUC DE CHARTRES' EXTRAVAGANT
 PROJECT—THE DISGUISE—THE PRINCE AND DUBOIS IN THE
 PARLOUR—MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE—MADAME
 DE MONTESPAN—THE KING AT THE CARMELITES—THE
 DUC DE CHARTRES REVEALS HIMSELF TO LA VALLIÈRE—
 ESCAPE FROM THE CONVENT—THE DUC'S REGRETS

M. DE LA VIEUVILLE died on the 2nd of February 1689; we might easily have failed to notice it, for the title of governor was the extent of his office; he hardly saw his pupil twice a week, and he did not speak four words to him. He was the third to succumb in the Prince's education; Messieurs de Navailles, d'Estrades, and de La Vieuville succeeded one another at intervals of two years, as though the post were an untenable one. The last, indeed, who had just been nominated Chevalier of the King's Orders, only enjoyed the honour a month; he was little regretted, and little deserved to be. I have never seen a sorrier gentleman—a cuckold, and laughed at to his face; ignorant and proud, puffed up with his ancestors and his own importance.

"This education," he said on his death-bed, "is a snare; everybody dies. I fear lest, after me, they find no titled gentlemen to undertake it."

Indeed, this education was like the bride of Tobias, whom one could not approach and live. There was something astounding, at the first glance, in this mortality, which, at bottom, was natural enough, since it fell upon old men between the age of seventy and eighty. For my part, I conceived no apprehension; for I am not superstitious. It seemed to me, on the contrary, that Providence was working for me. The Duc de Chartres was in hopes that he would have no other governor beside myself, who rendered life agreeable to him, carrying on at once the education

CHAPTER X

of his temperament and of his mind. It was enough for him, moreover, once to have tasted liberty, to hold servitude in horror.

"Dubois," he said to me, on learning the death of Monsieur de La Vieuville, "if you were a sorcerer, I should believe this death, as well as some others, to be your work."

"Monseigneur," I answered, "I know too well what pleasure there is in life to deprive even my greatest foe of it."

"In any case, let us arrange that governors do not grow like hydra-heads. Thanks to you, I have no page."

We were both vexed alike to learn that the Marquis d'Arcy had accepted the dangerous inheritance of the Duc de La Vieuville. This marquis, who had risen from an obscure gentleman by dint of painting people of quality, had become so as an indifferent matter; he had employed his life in embassies and services. He was a distinguished man of war, and I have had the proofs of his valour beneath my own eyes. The nobility and dignity of his manners pleased the Duc de Chartres at first; but as soon as he sought to inaugurate his authority, the Prince, who had the appearance of a man, all beardless as he was, sought him out under my advice, and said to him with energy:

"Monsieur, if you wish us to remain good friends, you will concern yourself, in no way, with my conduct in private; in public, as much as you will. I am of age to have no more pedagogues, and I want none; if this arrangement suits you, I promise you all my friendship."

The Marquis d'Arcy did not make him repeat himself, and seeing it was a deliberate line of action, he did as the Prince wished.

It was about this period that I lent myself to an imprudence which had like to cost me dear; had not my star protected me, I should have been lost without resource. This singular piece of rashness reveals the capriciousness of the great, and the weakness of those who are complacent to them. I cannot recall it without looking upon it as a dream.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier who, after having failed to make a number of marriages, and having conducted a number of intrigues, was secretly married to M. de Lauzun, was deserted by him, when, by dint of many sacrifices, she had obtained his release from prison, after a detention of ten years at Pignerol;

she consoled herself in religion for the love-sorrows which were no longer congruous with her age. This was a conversion which must have cost her many a tear, for she loved pleasure beyond all things. She condemned herself to the *régime* of priests, masses, and hair-shrouds, which did not prevent her from putting on rouge; her health being feeble, instead of having recourse to the doctors, she surrounded herself with relics which failed to cure her. Following her confessor's advice, she sought her cures from the Carmelites of the Rue de Bouloy, who were famous. Mademoiselle de La Vallière had taken the veil, and adopted the name of Louise, Sœur de la Miséricorde. These Carmelites were not merely occupied with the preparation of potions and blessed pills, accompanied with indulgences; they insinuated themselves into politics, and in the Queen's lifetime had professed to play a part in the affairs of the Court. I believe they took the side of Madame de Montespan against Madame de Maintenon. The King, who felt sore at the efforts they had made to attract Mademoiselle de La Vallière to them, threatened to close their convent. This threat did not prevent them from a concern in worldly matters, and they continued to receive the best persons at Court, both men and women. All the show of austerity, of which they made a parade, was a deception, and concerts and banquets stood them in stead of penitence. The fashion of visiting them, bringing them presents, and of consulting them as oracles, gave them an importance which they increased with all their might; and often sermons attracted a mighty company, toilettes, and hubbub into their church. Their reputation was in such bad odour that it was stated openly that they only pronounced three vows—pride, interest, and hatred. Mademoiselle de La Vallière, displeased at having entered such a nest of intrigue, had no part in their lax conduct, and scarcely left her cell. The King had not been once to see her, as the Carmelites had hoped, in order that their house might be thrown into relief; and only at the time of the marriage of Mademoiselle de Blois with the Prince de Conti, he had sent his congratulations to the mother, who had replied: "God have mercy upon her!" Sorrow had made her truly a saint.

Mademoiselle, therefore, went to *en-Carmelite* herself. She told her troubles to the superior, who presented her with a

potion from her pharmacy. The Duchesse de Montpensier would have died if she had emptied the phial to the last drop, and, indisposed as she was, it made her dangerously ill. Whether she had omitted some sign of the cross, or that the superior had made a mistake in the bottle, the remedy produced colics and alarming vomiting. The King was informed of it at a moment when he was in a mighty ill-temper; all the Court was there, the Duc de Chartres as well.

"The devil take the Carmelites," cried the King, in a voice like thunder: "I was well aware they were intriguers, slanderers, huckstresses, and plagues that shame religion, but I did not know they were poisoners; I will have them driven from France!"

These terrible words led to no result, for the whole of Christendom stood between the King and the Carmelites, who escaped with abuse. This scene gave rise to the most extreme piece of insolence on the part of the Duc de Chartres, who made me his accomplice in spite of myself.

"Dubois," said he to me, seizing my hands, "there is need of courage—great courage!"

"You alarm me, Monseigneur."

"Listen, you shall scold me afterwards, if you have leisure; but for some days past I have been devising a scheme which might cost you a hanging."

"Then, Monseigneur, postpone it as long as may be possible; I feel in no humour to risk my neck gaily."

"Do you think nothing of the fact of being agreeable to me? I am imprudent, mad, extravagant; no matter, I shall have time later to do penitence for my follies."

"And I, naturally, am to be the scapegoat to bear the weight of Monseigneur's iniquities. I can guess that it is a matter of some abduction."

"No. I have so often heard talk of the beautiful Duchesse de la Vallière. . . ."

"Gracious Heaven! Do you remember that she is a Carmelite, and fifty years old?"

"Are you afraid of my falling in love with her?"

"Faith! I think you capable of many things. To be brief, what do you want of Mademoiselle de La Vallière, or rather of the Sœur de la Miséricorde?"

"I want to see her, and hear her. I have been told that she is still divinely lovely, and then, they relate wonders of the Carmelites; they are charming girls, with nothing severe about them but their habits."

"Well, like all the Court, you can go there to seek for prayers and recipes; but I will set myself down a rogue, if you find any *ingénue* there who has escaped the courtiers."

"Fie! a pretty pleasure to look at women through an iron grating! Look now at the means I have devised: I disguise myself as a girl of quality; I have no fear that my face will betray me, or that I show myself a man in any respect. Thus my masquerade will succeed. I present myself with you at the convent; you are a venerable priest, confessor, converter; I trust to you to make yourself what you are not; it is you who have shown me the path of grace; and I desire, against my parents' wishes, to become a nun."

"And if you are taken at your word."

"I will undertake the rest; I am certain that the Carmelites will receive me with open arms, for I will give myself out to be of a great family, rich and noble."

"But consider the danger!"

"It is what I consider the least; besides, I have not waited for your advice, and Puel has procured me a woman's dress, which I have tried on; I vow to you my own father would not recognise me in such a travesty."

I was not strong enough to maintain my opinion against that of the Prince; I feigned a pedagogue's anger with a litany of oaths. Nothing mattered; the Duc de Chartres laughed in my face, and told me calmly that if I would not accompany him, he would even do without my stupid self. I let myself bow to necessity, and, all our measures being taken, all our plans fixed, we started for Saint-Cloud, in the sight and hearing of all. But towards the evening Puel and Laurent were charged to conceal our absence, and we returned to Paris in a hackney-coach. We were set down in the Rue de Bouloy, and encouraged one another to play our parts skilfully. The Prince, beneath his elegant robes, had the air of an heiress; the tall head-dress he wore did not spoil his handsome face, which might have excited envy in the sex he imitated. His eyes would have enslaved many a heart, and I vowed to him, under my breath, that I, who knew

the reality of things, felt myself almost amorous. For myself, I had taken for livery a perfectly new cassock. It was eight o'clock of the evening when we were introduced into the parlour, which we fortunately found empty. We were announced to the Sœur Thérèse, Abbess of the Convent, and while they were gone to tell her, a fat Abbé entered, humming an air. I recognised Chaulieu, who clasped me in his arms with demonstrations of friendship; he would have spared me had he been sober.

"It is you, my dear Abbé," said he; "I congratulate you on having made a master epicurean of our Prince. I am told that the little rogue will outstrip father and mother."

"Ah! and what are you doing at the Carmelites?" I resumed abruptly, to turn the conversation.

"And yourself, my dear son? As for me, I have come on a visit to an ancient sin—a former mistress, who has preferred God to me."

"Yes," said I; "but I have met the Marquis de La Fare, who is looking for you."

"I have just left the table with him. The devil! What Carmelite is that?"

"I swear the Marquis is waiting for you at the Chevalier's."

"To be sure, I had forgotten it. Between ourselves, the wine was marvellous. Adieu, Abbé."

I saw the inopportune fellow depart with inexpressible joy; and, for fear lest he should return, I shut the door when the superior arrived. She was a somewhat mature beauty, a coquette still under her robe of wool, smiling and accustomed to the world.

"My dear sister," said the Prince (whilst I was trembling lest he should betray us with the first word), "you see a poor sinner who comes to throw herself into your arms. I am Mademoiselle Charlotte —" (I forget what great name he added to that of Charlotte) "my family is powerful, and its wealth is not inferior to its nobility. They seek to marry me against my will, and are opposed to my vocation, which tells me to shut myself in the cloister. My parents fear to see my fortune scattered in alms and donations. At last, as I had no more hope of escaping from this union, which I dread more than death, encouraged by my worthy confessor, who has deigned to accompany me in my flight, I come to crave asylum and your protection."

This fable was related in a tone so sweet, and with such naive simplicity, that the Abbess made us both pass into the interior of

the convent. In doing this, she was acting in the interest of her order. The retreat of Mademoiselle Charlotte de — could not fail to create a mighty talk. My entrance to the convent had nothing remarkable about it, and the pretext I gave of confirming my penitent in her projects, gave me the right of residence amongst the Lord's handmaids. However, I was far from feeling reassured; and, for the first time in my life, did not think to profit by the good things chance brought to my door. I was shut up during the night in a chamber, where I hardly slept at all. The Prince was more fortunate; the Sœur Sainte-Thérèse had already taken an affection for him, and I would not dare assert that he slept any better than I. On the morrow, I was delivered, and received permission to walk with Mademoiselle Charlotte in the garden.

"Ah! Dubois," said the Prince, "how full of delight is this contemplative life! I would I could change my sex, and never leave this home of peace and happiness."

"In truth," I answered, "if you were a Carmelite for good, you would think differently."

"No matter; these moments are the finest of my existence. I have seen Mademoiselle de La Vallière; I have spoken with her."

"Would you believe, Monseigneur, they locked me up all night in my cell?"

"Dubois, I know nothing more noble, more majestic than this angel of sweetness and goodness! How could the King, who loved her, love her no more? What barbarity to let her bury herself alive! She has already an affection for me; I cannot express all the divinity in her accent."

"But she is no longer young."

"What do I know! She seems so, and I have forgotten her age since I have seen her."

"Monseigneur, you choose your time badly to fall in love."

"I am not; but I bear the King a grudge for having rewarded such love with such infidelity. Alas! from the emotion she shows at his name, I do not believe she is cured of that love."

A Carmelite with an imposing carriage, though she was slightly lame, advanced towards us.

"It is she," said the Prince, with a blush, and he went to meet her. I did not follow him; but I admired, at a distance, those blue eyes, that gentle expression, and that perfect form, which

the years had respected. I did not disturb an interview which the Duc de Chartres has never revealed to me. Suddenly, I heard Sœur de la Miséricorde say in a moved voice: "There is Madame de Montespan!"

These words made me shudder, and Mademoiselle Charlotte seemed equally ill at ease. A lady, dressed in black, had just entered the garden with a priest; she passed so near me that I had time to contemplate her face to face; it was a triumphant beauty, and her eyes, her lips, her complexion might still pass as admirable—one would have said a queen, to see her walk, her head raised high, and with an air of deliberation. She was not very tall, however, and I think she had lost flesh with her penances and her journeyings to Bourbon and Fontevault, for I recognised nothing of that plumpness which had been so vaunted to me. There was an irony in her expression, a pride in her person, a hardness in her voice, which had not changed, in spite of the change in her position. Her piercing gaze forced me to lower my eyes. I felt relieved, and breathed more freely when I saw she had not deigned to pay any attention to me. I was roused from my preoccupation by a voice which I did not know. It was the Père Latour, the same who is still superior-general of the Oratory, then confessor of Madame de Montespan, who addressed me with benevolence:

"It is you, Monsieur," he said, "who have brought Mademoiselle Charlotte de —?"

I answered in the affirmative; he put me a host of questions, which I eluded as far as possible, and I succeeded, not without difficulty, in turning the conversation to Madame de Montespan.

"Monsieur," he said to me, with an air of satisfaction, "I venture to say that this conversion does me honour, and I have not yet arrived at the point to which I would bring it. I have bent that soul of steel beneath the yoke of penitence, and now profound humility has succeeded to pride."

"Appearances are deceitful," said I, watching the haughty manners of this lady, who was speaking to Mademoiselle Charlotte.

"I have persuaded her," he continued, "to write to her husband, to ask his pardon and to place herself in his hands."

"What did Monsieur de Montespan reply?" I asked.

"That he would neither receive her, nor hear her spoken of

during his life. After this sacrifice of her self-esteem, she has perfected herself in piety; she gives all she has to the poor; she works with her hands at coarse work, at linen for women who lie in, at shifts for the sick; she forgets herself in order to occupy herself only with her neighbour; her table is only notable for its frugality; she fasts every other day, and her prayers are repeated hourly."

"Poor lady!" I cried, "she is still strangely beautiful!"

"You do not know the lacerations she practises on that body whose charms were once so disastrous for her. Beneath her clothes she wears shifts of the roughest cloth; her skin is ceaselessly torn by garters, armlets, and girdles, with spikes of iron."

I did not reply; I was indignant at these cruelties.

"The sinner will become a saint," he added, "and I have promised her Paradise in recompense. However, in spite of that, you would not believe the fear she has of death, which will be her eternal salvation. At night she lies with her curtains open, surrounded by hundreds of candles, and as she is accustomed to awake every moment with a start, she has women who watch round her bed, who eat and play; but for that she would think herself already in her grave."

The sentiment of disgust inspired in me by this form of penitence was at its height. I looked then at the man who spoke to me; his was the churchman's face, which one sees so frequently—red, puffy, with small bright eyes and a smile of happiness. He left me to rejoin Madame de Montespan, who had just separated from Mademoiselle de La Vallière. I ventured to draw near the Duc de Chartres, who had not lost countenance as Mademoiselle Charlotte; I approached him just at the moment when Mademoiselle de La Vallière was saying with bitterness:

"Why is it that this arrogant woman pursues me, even in my retreat, as though I were still her rival?"

"Madame," said the Duc de Chartres, looking at her tenderly, "Madame de Montespan is not so beautiful as I had heard."

"She is very beautiful," she answered with indifference, "but she is not good."

"Madame," said I, joining in the conversation, "some important motive must have brought Madame de Montespan here."

"None, unless it be to see with her own eyes if my austerities have greatly aged me; she is consoled for her own misfortune by what she calls mine, although I have never been more happy than now."

"The Père Latour," I remarked, "has nevertheless assured me, that she was converted, and lived like a saint."

"Her tongue," she said sadly, "has not participated in the reformation; you heard, Mademoiselle Charlotte, the mockery she made of my habit and my face."

"She treated Sœur de la Miséricorde," said the Prince, "as she might have treated Mademoiselle de La Vallière in the full glamour of her favour."

"I suspect," I added, "that all these devout appearances are no more than arms against Madame de Maintenon, in order to win back the King once more."

"You have guessed," she answered with a smile; "and I could better explain her visit if His Majesty were to come to the Carmelites to-day."

"The King! To-day!" cried Mademoiselle Charlotte, turning pale.

"At least, it was said so yesterday, and although he has not honoured me with a recollection in the thirteen years since I took the veil, I should be little astonished if he did not remember the Carmelites, if only to acquaint them with his resentment."

"Indeed," I resumed quickly, "after the illness of Mademoiselle."

"Alas!" said Mademoiselle de La Vallière, "men are so evil; the bars of a cloister cannot always guard us from calumny."

"And if the King were to come, Madame!" said the Duc de Chartres.

"No, no; I would not see him. I cannot, I will not; it is an inviolable oath."

Talking, we had come to the entrance to the cloisters, when a noise resounded through the whole convent: "The King! The King!" The sisters, repeating this name, ran to the parlours. We noticed that Madame de Montespan was not the last to rush to the side where the tumult was thickest.

"Let us flee!" cried Mademoiselle de La Vallière. "Do not desert me; I feel too weak. The sight of him would bring back all the past."

"The King!" I cried, in terror. "What will become of us!"

"Madame—a word," said the Duc de Chartres, clasping his hands. "Have mercy on us; save two imprudent——"

"What do I hear?" she interrupted. "Are you not . . .?"

"Mercy, Madame," he said, in a low voice.

"Who are you, then?" she asked, hesitating.

"The Duc de Chartres."

She made a silent gesture of surprise, lifted her eyes to Heaven, and led us to her cell, where she shut us up. She herself, no doubt, went to prostrate herself in the chapel, to seek in religion the strength which failed her. But her fears and ours were happily dissipated. The King's carriage passed before the convent, and stopped; Monsieur descended from it, bitterly reproached the Abbess on behalf of His Majesty, and left her with threats which vexed the Carmelites mightily. Mademoiselle de la Vallière came herself to set us free from the prison in which she had put us, without thinking of what there might be equivocal in the protracted *tête-à-tête* of Mademoiselle Charlotte and myself. But from the moment that she knew the Prince's secret, she affected to have no further communication with him; her eyes, however, had not succeeded in assuming a severe expression.

"Monseigneur," she said to the Duc de Chartres, "I leave it to your conscience to condemn the levity of your conduct, the consequences of which you doubtless did not contemplate. The poor Carmelites have enemies enough to lay hold of this adventure and turn it to their disadvantage, in spite of their being utterly innocent of your culpable attempt. I regret that Monsieur, who has not, like you, the excuse of youth, should have lent himself to this ruse. I do not think you had dared to continue it longer. Since you have confided your secret to me, I am permitted to furnish you with the means of leaving here, recommending you secrecy in my turn."

We followed her in silence to a door, which she opened for us. The Duc de Chartres kissed her hand, which she did not withdraw; and we bade farewell to the Carmelites, not as satisfied as we had hoped to be with the adventure.

Purel and Laurent had concealed our absence so well that no one had perceived it.

The Duc de Chartres talked ceaselessly of the beautiful Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and it required no less than five

or six *grisettes* to diminish his regrets, which I combated with all my might.

"In the King's place," said he, "how I should have loved her!"

"Monseigneur," said I, "for how many days?"

The story of Mademoiselle Charlotte, her entrance and disappearance from the Carmelites, transpired, as all that is scandalous does; slander embroidered it all, and it was talked about even at Court.

CHAPTER XI

THE ROYAL FAMILY IN 1688—THE GRAND DAUPHIN—HIS
TIMIDITY, ECONOMY, AND SENSUALITY—HIS AMOURS—
MADEMOISELLE FLEURY—MADEMOISELLE CHOUIN, MARRIED
TO MONSEIGNEUR—THE COURT OF MEUDON—THE GRANDE
DAUPHINE—THE PERFUMED GLOVES—THE PRINCESSE DE
CONTI—THE ALLEGED LETTERS—THE COMTE DE VERMANDOIS
—HIS DEBAUCHERY

I MUST not omit to draw a picture of the royal family at the epoch when I was admitted to the Court. I had very few acquaintances in it, and could think of nothing better, in order to pass the time, than to abandon myself to my taste for minute observation; I have even preserved some written notes from that period, wherein the truth too often puts on the allures of satire. I am in a position to rectify them to-day, and, as the majority of the persons whom they concern are dead, I think I can judge them dispassionately from the pinnacle of my experience. I do not know, but only the lie which is written seems to me culpable; moreover, what interest should I have in lying to myself?

The *Grand Dauphin*, known by the title of *Monseigneur*, resembled the Queen in features, in manners the King. He was of medium height, elegant in spite of his stoutness; in the manner of his physiognomy, and in his carriage, there was a certain good-nature. The King, his father, who loved him with his accustomed indifference, said that his son had the look of a German prince. His face was pleasant, although it bore the marks of a kick, given him accidentally by the Prince de Conti, when they were both children. His complexion, tanned and red like a drunkard's, did not go with his hair, of a beautiful blonde colour; his dwarfish, deformed feet were an ill termination to his superb legs. The same disproportion existed in his mind, which had its night and day, sometimes heavy, silly, embarrassed, sometimes express-

ing itself with clearness and nobility. His character had also its ups and downs: to-day his kindness knew no bounds, and it was a pleasure to hear his promises; to-morrow, with consummate naughtiness, he busied himself in vexing those who were dearest to him. These singular contrasts recurred from one moment to another; he was, as it were, two men in one.

The grave and pedantic education, which he had received from Montausier and Bossuet, had made him what he was. Madame de Grignan, who, according to the priest Gobelin, made epigrams even at confession, said of the *Grand Dauphin* that what was good in him came from his preceptors, and the evil came from his nature alone. I would fain believe the contrary. M. de Montausier was of an extreme roughness, which the Court had never subdued. MM. de Meaux and Fléchier, austere by condition, in order to ingratiate themselves with the King, redoubled their severity with their pupil; this had rendered him so timorous that it had been justly said of him, he was the first subject of Louis XIV. He took no heed of the affairs of the Government, because he dared not. Moreover, his indolence and indifference were in excellent harmony with the nullity to which his father had reduced him. I have been assured, however, that this was but a varnish, and that, beneath this contempt of greatness, he concealed a secret ambition. Madame d'Epinoy, who, as the friend of Mademoiselle Chouin, was admitted into the private intimacy of Meudon, has related to me that he would pass whole days in looking at engravings of the ceremonies of the consecration, saying to himself aloud: "Here, they will place the crown on my head. There, they will fasten on my spurs." Certainly, this soliloquy must needs have been founded on the hope of the King's death. In the lifetime of Monseigneur, this device, derived from the father of Philip of Valois, which the event has justified, was applied to him: *Son of a king, father of a king, never a king*. Whence, doubtless, the little intimacy which existed between father and son.

This fear, which presided over all his words, was apparent also in the commonest actions of his life. He groped with his feet as he walked, as though there had been precipices all around him; the smallest pebble made him fear a fall, and his hand was extended at once to seek a support; he rode on horseback

well, but could not endure to gallop; at the chase, as soon as he lost sight of his suite, he halted, in great uneasiness, and called for Casau, who followed him like his shadow. He tried to copy the grand state which distinguished Louis XIV, but his imitation was a mean one, except as regards egoism, which he carried to a barbarous degree. His familiarity with inferiors, valets, stablemen, and petty fellows, was undignified, and his avarice was only economy; for he did not seek money with that greediness which is often remarked in princes; and, although he did not lavish it in handfals, the King had given him leave to dip freely in his treasury, and he would never take advantage of this permission.

His liking for whatever was sensual never led him into excesses; he loved good cheer with delicacy, and not with brutality; he indulged in it moderately, especially since a terrible indigestion, the result of exceeding, had been like to turn to apoplexy. Had he succeeded his father, he would have been a true King Log. Love was one of his relaxations, but always sensual love, inspired by temperament only. I do not speak of the habit of attachment he had for Mademoiselle Chouin, apart from his gallantries. Mademoiselle Chouin, as everyone knows, finished by secretly wedding him. I doubt if he loved her with his eyes, so easy was he to please. The most vulgar beauties were treated by him as the most divine, provided they arrived at the right season. Ordinarily, he sought his pleasures amongst the ruck of the maids of honour of his wife. Mademoiselle Rambures, and Mademoiselle de la Force, who was subsequently made to marry the young Duroure, were sold to him by Madame de Montchevreuil; and Francine, Lully's son-in-law, who had the opera with Dumont for so long, had the charge of purveying for Monseigneur's closet. Francine himself related to me a secret incident, which fully proves that the Dauphin did not look at his mistress's faces. They had promised him a delicate morsel, and the little person whom he expected arrived under the escort of a wrinkled, pock-marked, and vastly fat old woman. The first closet into which they were introduced was apparently badly lighted; for the Prince opened the door, and seized hold of the one who was nearest his hand. This was the old woman, who made no resistance, not knowing what was expected of her; and the other, amused at the mistake, which would be entirely to her advantage, fell a-laughing. Francine arrived at this juncture.

"Pray, where is Mademoiselle —?" he asked her.

"Shut up with Monseigneur."

"Why?"

"How do I know? Monseigneur chose her himself."

"Impossible; there is some mistake on his part." Thereupon he began to thump the door, crying: "Monseigneur, you are mistaken; it is not the one."

There was no answer until the Dauphin opened the door and dismissed the ugly creature, triumphant at his preference, which she attributed to her own charms. The door having shut upon her, Francine resumed his cries and protests.

"Monseigneur, here is the other."

"What would you have me do with her?"

"She is charming, and you will be pleased with her."

"I don't want any more; it will be for another time."

Francine withdrew with the two damsels, who had not expected to become rivals.

In spite of this blind impartiality, he loved long and greatly the actress Ransin, whose particular merits were her plumpness and an unexampled docility. The old Maréchal de Noailles, who often invited this actress and received her at his table, in order to pay his court to the Dauphin, dubbed her the lay figure of Monseigneur's penances. The latter, indeed, made her fast and pray, because, said he to Madame, when she reproached him with it, "I am very willing to commit a sin, but not without an indulgence." One day, when he sent her to Choisy, she was hidden in an arbour in the garden, where she stayed until the evening, without either eating or drinking. She bore this enforced fast with patience; at last he came for her himself, bringing a biscuit and preserves. "Mademoiselle," said he, "I have brought you here because it is an ember-day, and you might have eaten meat to your soul's damnation."

He let her leave, half-dead with hunger. The only bastard he had by his mistresses was a daughter by this Ransin, known under the name of Mademoiselle Fleury, educated by the Augustines of Chaillot, and married to a gentleman, through the efforts of the Princesse de Conti. She died in 1716.

Monseigneur's passion for Mademoiselle Chouin has always seemed to me incomprehensible. What charmed him greatly was that prodigious bosom, which he called his *kettledrums*.

Mademoiselle Chouin, who is still alive in retirement, was neither avaricious nor ambitious. The Dauphin only gave her sixteen hundred louis a year; even then he counted them out scrupulously, for fear of giving her one over. When he was about to go and take command of the army in Flanders, he made a will in which Mademoiselle Chouin was not forgotten; but she no sooner knew of his intentions in her favour than she induced him to commit all to the flames. Thus Monseigneur left her nothing at his death, and I do not think she had aught beyond four thousand livres, the revenue of her savings. As to her secret marriage with the Dauphin, the King, who, doubtless, had his reasons for being indulgent to *mésalliances*, connived at it; for he offered Mademoiselle Chouin an apartment at Versailles, and when she kept her court at Meudon, she remained seated in her arm-chair in the presence of the Ducs de Bourgogne and Berri, who only had stools; the Duchesse de Bourgogne, however, only called her *Mademoiselle*. Finally, during a dangerous illness of the Dauphin, she entered alone into his chamber, and passed hours there, seated by his pillow.

He was at open war with Madame de Maintenon, especially after he had opposed the declaration of her marriage with the King. She did not forgive him this; it was she who chose his sons' masters, and even their household; she was jealous that the people of Paris, who hated her, should have a real passion for him; the market-women, indeed, never failed to run after his carriage with a thousand blessings, and to bring him bouquets. Monseigneur, moreover, was too much attached to the Montespan, whose son, d'Antin, was still one of his intimates. The Court of Meudon, but scantily frequented, saw no changes. It was made up of Madame la Duchesse, Madame, and Mademoiselle de Lillebonne, d'Antin, Dangeau, the Maréchal d'Uxelles, the Comte de Roucy, Sainte-Maure and Albergotti. Mademoiselle Chouin played the little queen.

It has been alleged that the Prince's tastes were not confined to women. This reputation, which was given him unjustly, angered him to the last degree. The Chevalier de Lorraine, having ventured to make a joke of it before him, he said to him in anger: "If anyone dared to boast of this infamy in my presence, my contempt would prove to him the extent of my horror at such as he."

He had, however, one of the most singular manias, which the King has often made a reproach to him. As soon as he saw a lady or a young girl preparing to sit down, he would place his fist upon the chair with his thumb extended in the fashion of a syringe. I have seen him behave in this manner to Madame, who, in high astonishment, and red with anger, said aloud:

"Monseigneur, I cannot endure to be touched so; do not do it again, for a blow comes ready to me."

At the epoch at which I am, the Dauphin had his three sons; the Duc de Bourgogne, who foretold what he would be (a mixture of the Duc de Beauvilliers, and of Fénélon, his tutors), the Duc d'Anjou and the Duc de Berri, who were still children. I have a few words to say of their mother, who died two years afterwards, from the sorrows caused her by the Maintenon.

She was very ugly, but her ugliness was not disagreeable. Her mind, though it was spoiled by her Bavarian superstitions, and her politeness, though it was chilled by her childish shyness, made her generally loved. I have been told that she had possessed a pretty figure; but when she was brought to bed of the Duc de Berri, she contracted a deformity, either because Clément, her accoucheur, had accidentally wounded her, or because the Princesse de Conti had approached her with perfumed gloves, and that by the advice of Madame de Maintenon. It is possible that the thing so happened; but it would be absurd to see in it any more malevolence than imprudence. The fact is, that an hour before her death, the Dauphine, looking sadly at her youngest son, who was seated on her bed, said these words to him which accuse nobody: "My dear Berri, I love you well; but you do not know what you have cost me!" Nevertheless, I hear on good authority that the story of the perfumed gloves is true; the Princesse de Conti, Madame, and Madame de Maintenon were gathered round the *accouchée*.

The latter cried: "O Lord! which of you ladies has perfume on you? I feel myself fainting."

"It is not I," exclaimed the three ladies in chorus, and none of them would admit it.

I am the more ready to believe that the perfume came from Madame de Maintenon, as she had, as I have said, the habit of embalming herself like a mummy.

The Dauphine had a German waiting-maid, named La Bessola,

who made her life a hell. She was the most wicked creature alive; she had so cunningly obtained her mistress's confidence that it was impossible to unmask her. The Dauphine answered all that was said to her with a view of detaching her from La Bessola:

"Have we not all our weaknesses? Mine is La Bessola."

She confessed that she preferred this wench to her husband.

La Bessola ruled the Dauphine at her will, spied out her least actions, plumbed her most secret thoughts, and betrayed her to the Maintenon, with whom she was leagued by a money interest. In vain did Madame warn the Dauphine of all this intrigue; nothing availed, she was only set more obstinately on her insane love. The Maintenon treated her mighty ill, and ceaselessly threatened to embroil her with the King. She had even circulated a rumour amongst the people that the Dauphine, a Bavarian princess, detested France, and was always suggesting fresh taxes. Whence the proverbial insult: "The Devil or the Dauphine."

Since the latter's death, they have done me the honour of inserting my name in lieu of hers in the proverb.

The two sons whom Louis XIV had by Mademoiselle de La Vallière, died young. Her daughter, Marie-Anne, who wedded the Prince de Conti, is still living. I think that pious practices preserve; look at the freshness of nuns. She was of a perfect beauty, at once noble and interesting; she resembled her mother, except that she lacked that softness of gaze, that angelic smile which I have seen in no other woman, and which has something of heaven about it. The marriage of this beautiful creature was celebrated under the most favourable auspices; the bridal pair loved one another in a pretty fashion, which greatly amused the King; but on their wedding night, a sound of sobs and tears was heard in the bride's chamber, which brought people in; it was asserted that the Princess had been suddenly taken ill. In fact, she kept her room for some days, with convulsions and incredible pains. The couplets which were bandied from mouth to mouth were not to the honour of the husband, whose brother, the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, made a duty of repairing his omissions. At a Court ball he cried, in admiration of the Princess's wonderful dancing: "They are not feet, but wings."

The Prince de Conti, who knew of the songs which had arisen owing to his brother's attentions to his wife, stamped his foot in fury.

"Good! as though there were not enough for two," said the Chevalier de Lorraine aloud, careless as to whether he was overheard. On the following day, the Prince de Conti struck the Chevalier on the cheek, and asked him to do him the honour of fighting him.

"With pleasure, Monsieur," replied the Chevalier; "send a second to my brother, the Chevalier de Marsan; but not your own brother, I pray you, it would be too bad for Madame la Princesse if he were killed."

A day being fixed, a rendezvous given, the Chevalier, who was not so mad as to draw his sword against a Prince of the Blood, went and told Monsieur everything, who repeated it to the King. The affair was stopped. Shortly afterwards, the two brothers, that calumny might be silenced, started together for the army of Hanover. The Prince de Conti died of the small-pox. The Princess, having been left a childless widow, thought only of her pleasures. M. de Clermont-Chatte, ensign of the Gendarmes of the Guard, a handsome man, tall and well made, was not the last to perceive the good-will the Princess bore him. He was no intriguer, though he had wit, and he was almost a kinsman of M. de Luxembourg. He did not use his amour to promote his fortune, and it is this which lost him; for if he had exploited the empire his mistress had over the King, he would have been in a position to repulse his enemies. He started for the siege of Philipsburg, more in love than ever, and swearing to become even more so during his absence. But the Maintenon, who wished to harm the Chouin, Monseigneur's favourite, and who reproached the Princess with not putting her lot in her hands, devised a diabolical scheme to revenge herself on both at once. She was informed by her people of the amours of the princess and M. de Clermont; she betrayed the secrecy of the post-office therefore, and obtained possession of the correspondence of the two lovers. So far it was an honest piece of treachery; but she conceived the plan of having several letters forged, professing to have been written to M. de Clermont by the Chouin, with that officer's replies. In order that the wickedness might be complete, these letters were filled with insults and abuse of the King and all the Court. It was a skilful plan to embroil at once, Monseigneur with his favourite, the Princess with her lover. These praiseworthy epistles passed into the hands of Louis XIV, who shuddered in

horror of this double intrigue. He sent in the afternoon, in all haste, for his daughter. She arrived, with much emotion, suspecting some storm.

"Madame," he said to her severely, "you see how you have placed your confidence." He showed her first the letters which M. de Clermont had sent her, and which she had not received; she blushed, stammered, and burst into tears. The King handed her the forged letters. She would have easily perceived the writing had been imitated, but her wounded vanity confused her; she was completely the dupe of the conspiracy, and fell into an extreme despair, which her father consoled with soft words, for he had always loved her more than all his daughters. On the following day, the disgrace of the Chouin was known, and the defence she sought to make did not seem probable to anyone. The King undertook to acquaint Monsieur with all the bother. Mademoiselle Chouin withdrew by command to the Abbey of Port-Royal at Paris, whither her friends, Mesdames de Lillebonne, came to console her. The Princess, overwhelmed at such a blow, tried to kill herself by swallowing broken glass; the Maintenon triumphed. The Dauphin, on his return from the taking of Philipsburg, in despair at what had happened, went to see Mademoiselle Chouin in her retreat; she excused herself so well, that he sought information on every side, and, by dint of money, discovered the Maintenon's perfidious intrigue. His father would not have been ready to believe it; he was satisfied, therefore, to confide what he knew to the Princesse de Conti, and Mademoiselle Chouin returned to favour, if not M. de Clermont-Chatte, who had, perhaps, found a successor. Since that time, the Princesse de Conti, as she aged, has quite changed her mode of life, and if she has still any love for anything, it is only for God and her confessor.

This is the place for some details as to the second son of Mademoiselle de La Vallière, the Comte de Vermandois, who died long before my coming to Court. But people have obstinately tried to see in this young Prince, the Man in the Iron Mask. I have reasons for believing they are deceived in this, and that the Comte de Vermandois had never anything in common with that unhappy prisoner. Madame, who, in spite of her horror of the bastards, loved this young Prince like her own son, has often sung his praises to me. He had received an unhealthy education;

but his heart was full of excellent and noble qualities. Impetuous and petulant, he knew of naught but pleasure; and yet his gentle and amiable face recalled, although he had a slight squint, the features of his mother. He was early formed, and at the age of fifteen his figure might have been compared with that of Lauzun. The Chevalier de Lorraine and the Comte de Marsan debauched him after their fashion. The full circumstances of an infamous orgy, where the reception of the Comte de Vermandois into a mysterious society took place, have never been known. The Prince proposed to the Dauphin to accompany him, promising him much pleasure, and concealing from him the character and constitution of this company, composed of the most distinguished young men of the Court. The Dauphin, who was jealous of the Comte de Vermandois' wit, accepted his invitation in order to spy upon his proceedings and report them to the King, whom Madame de Montespan had irritated against this son of Mademoiselle de La Vallière. It seems that the object of this assembly, which met near the Abbaye-aux-Bois, was to form a league against women. It was a sort of revival of the Templars. The Dauphin was exempted from sundry ceremonies and strange oaths which ill befitted a married man; he finished by starting a quarrel with the Comte de Vermandois, whom he insulted. The witnesses of this interposed between them, and both withdrew. The Comte de Vermandois recognised the chair which had brought the Dauphin; he stopped the bearers and cried to the person inside:

"Is it the sword or the cudgel you want?"

M. de Lauzun leapt out of the chair.

"Pardon me," said the Comte, "I thought I was speaking to the Dauphin."

The King was informed of the debauch which the Comte de Vermandois had indulged in. He summoned him, abused him, and recommended him never to show himself in his presence. The Comte swore to have satisfaction for his natural brother's treachery. The latter feared the excesses to which his brother might be carried towards him. Witness the anecdote of the sedan-chair, which Lauzun had related to him before starting for England; he made arrangements, therefore, never to be left alone.

On the birth of the Duc de Bourgogne, Madame vainly

entreated Louis XIV to pardon the Comte de Vermandois, who was very sad and very repentant.

"He has not been punished enough for his crimes," said the King harshly.

In the following year, a sort of reconciliation patched up a good understanding between father and son. It was agreed that the Comte de Vermandois should go to the siege of Courtrai to try his maiden arms. A most brilliant train was given him, and, on the eve of his departure, the Comte encountered Monseigneur in a secluded corner of the park of Versailles.

"Monsieur," he said to him, "we have not arms to settle a difference that is more than a year old; but I venture to hope you will grant me reparation this very day."

"Madman," replied the Dauphin, "do you forget that we are brothers?"

"Brothers! You are the first of my enemies!"

"Since you are the illegitimate son of Mademoiselle de La Vallière. . . ."

"Insolent! I will show you that everything is equal with us."

The Comte de Vermandois administered a blow to his brother, who answered him tranquilly:

"You may do what you like, Monsieur; I will never fight you. Were I to kill you, I should pass for your murderer; if I were killed, you would go to the scaffold."

"I deem myself avenged, Monseigneur, and it is for you now to demand reprisals of me. I shall never refuse you them."

The Dauphin went away in silence.

The Comte de Vermandois left, reached the camp at Courtrai, and fell ill almost immediately. They wrote to the King that he was dead from excessive drinking of brandy.

"I was sure," said the King coldly, "that that *débauché* would come to a bad end."

CHAPTER XII

CHILDREN OF THE KING AND MADAME DE MONTESPAN —
THEY ARE LEGITIMATISED—CHARACTER OF THE DUC DU
MAINE—THE COMTE DE TOULOUSE—MADEMOISELLE DE
NANTES—HER MARRIAGE WITH MONSIEUR LE DUC —
CHARACTER OF MONSIEUR LE PRINCE—M. ROSE—THE
FOXES AND THE IMITATION OF SAMSON—HIS MISTRESSES—
THE DUCHESSE DE LUDE—THE *GRANDE MADEMOISELLE*—
HER MARRIAGE WITH M. DE LAUZUN — DESPAIR AFTER HIS
ARREST—THE PRICE OF HIS LIBERTY—A GAMBLER'S JEST

LOUIS XIV had eight children by Madame de Montespan, in her husband's lifetime, and four of them had died in 1688. The first only lived three years, another two. The Comte de Vexin, who was destined to the Church, and who was overwhelmed with benefices from the cradle, succumbed, in his eleventh year, to infirmities which had been his from his birth, and which the physicians' art had only changed into a continual martyrdom. In a few months thirteen cauteries were applied to the dorsal spine. His mother loved experiments and quacks; she preferred to see her son dead rather than deformed like Scarron. This was her reply to Madame de Maintenon, who had reproached her with being the cause of the poor child's sufferings. Mademoiselle de Tours, born with a sickly constitution, did not survive her ninth year. Like her brothers and sisters, she had been acknowledged by the King.

This legitimatisation presented obstacles, besides being quite without precedent. The Marquis de Montespan had counted on the profits of cuckoldom. He was hardened to shame; and when he arrived at Court with his young and beautiful and virtuous wife, he bartered her, in some sort, to the King. Madame de Montespan wished to flee from the dangers she was not strong enough to brave. Her husband, by refusing to take her away, connived at all that happened. The commencement of the King's love delighted him with hopes of exalted

fortune; but as satisfaction to his excessive pretensions was refused, he sought to thwart a passion which he alone had encouraged. Madame de Maintenon was already mistress in title; the husband was threatened; he paid no attention to threats, and let his tongue go loose in reprisal. He was confined in the Bastille, and compelled to hold his peace. From there, thanks to the prayers of his wife, he was sent to Guienne, with a prohibition against leaving it. Large sums of money which were sent to him induced him to bear his fate with patience. But the natural children arrived at regular intervals. They sought his permission to acknowledge them under his own name; he replied that he did not make children a hundred leagues off. As she was married, it was necessary to conceal the mother's name; it was decided to rely upon a precedent. Saint-Paul, son of Madame de Longueville, a libertine, but a handsome man, who later lived at the expense of Madame d'Orlac, had a child by the Maréchale de La Ferté, whose husband refused to accept the responsibility for it. Madame de Montespan paid Saint-Paul, in order that he might legitimatise this child without designating the mother. Men of the law, well primed with crowns, defended this innovation. The Maréchal de La Ferté, although really fully informed of the truth, did not complain of the entrance of a stranger into his family, and Saint-Paul bore the whole onus of paternity himself. After that, the King did not scruple to imitate a subject.

The eldest of the bastards was the Duc du Maine; the world contains no one more malignant than he, unless it be his wife. When I saw him for the first time he was eighteen years old. His face was vulgarly ugly; in this respect he took neither after his father nor mother, a fact which led scoffers to say that Termes, spy and dissembling rogue, first *valet-de-chambre* to the King, was concerned in it. This was rather a slander than a calumny. Every feature of the Duc du Maine bore the stigmata of deceit and railing ill-nature. His smile was an epigram. This Prince was born straight and well-made; but convulsions ensuing when he was teething spoiled these natural advantages in his infancy, and one of his legs remained shorter than the other. Every remedy was tried in vain; the discouraged physicians recommended the waters of Bourbon, then of Barège, then of Aix-la-Chapelle. Madame de Maintenon, governess of Madame

de Montespan's children, dragged the little Duke all over France, everywhere receiving presents and hospitality. In the course of these journeys, which took her as far as Anvers, she wrote to Madame de Montespan, who showed her letters to the King. The latter forgot his antipathy in view of the governess's pretty wit, and the interest he took in this correspondence was the beginning of Madame de Maintenon's favour. It seems that the King's love for the Montespan was also born of hatred. The Duc du Maine returned as lame as before, but more cunning, and armed with fresh attractions. At an early age he had astonished the Court with his sharp and mordant utterances. At the age of three, as he had been forbidden to call the King "my papa," being in a gondola one day hard by that of Louis XIV, he cried:

"I drink the health of the King, my father," he replied to someone who was pitying him for his lameness.

"What does it matter? No one will notice it when I am seated on my throne."

Indeed, Madame de Maintenon had so fired his ambitious head, that he hoped to succeed his father, in spite of the legitimate heirs. I would not wager that he is even now altogether cured of this madness.

The Comte de Toulouse was of remarkable beauty, and although he was only ten years old at the epoch of which I speak, it was noticeable that Madame de Maintenon had had nothing to do with his education. Louvois had had him brought up in private by an old priest, in a house in the Rue de Vaugirard. He gave promise of those fine qualities which made him later rather a philosopher than a prince. He had all the virtues which the Duc du Maine lacked—courage, rectitude, and honour. His common-sense compensated for his little wit, and his gracious manners won him every heart. Happily he has not belied these happy commencements.

Mademoiselle de Nantes was the child of the Maréchal de Noailles, who never tired of making children for the King. Louis XIV, it is true, remained night and day in Madame de Montespan's apartment; he even worked there with his ministers; but the apartment was vast enough to enable the lady to escape from the vigilance of her argus. The bodyguards whom the King had given her, did not follow her into her wardrobe, and it was there that she received the Maréchal de Noailles, Captain

of the first Company. Mademoiselle de Nantes, indeed, resembled her real father in face, her mother in the temper of her mind. She was not beautiful, not even pretty, but infinitely charming; she had an old look when she was twelve, that is why she is so little changed to-day, when she is fifty. Her education was directed with a view to perfecting her graces, and adorning her with agreeable talents. She danced marvellously, although she had a slight limp like the Duc du Maine, and her uneven gait became her. I am mighty fond of those wide-awake looks and quick movements, which one cannot look at and remain cold. Her figure was not faultless, her wit had nothing extraordinary about it; but there was an infinite charm about her which promptly fascinated. Her manners counted for much in this seduction. As for goodness of heart, not the least appearance of it; a malignity of observation which found vent in witticisms, and did not scruple to wound an honest man. Nor has she, since then, reformed this spirit of contradiction, which cannot be satisfied except at its neighbour's expense. Withal, it is a dry heart, incapable of affection, if not of any other sentiment, since love resides in the heart alone. Such is at least my own opinion.

The great Condé was so enchanted with Mademoiselle de Nantes, who was only twelve years old, that he resolved to marry her to his grandson, Monsieur le Duc, who was about the same age. Louis XIV lent himself to the old man's fantasy, and this marriage was a little comedy for the Court. We saw Monsieur le Duc, disembarrassed for one day of his governor, gaily taking the little wife who was given him, and, after a magnificent wedding, put to bed with her in a vast bed, with a space of ten feet between them, whilst his father, M. le Prince, and Madame de Langeron watched quite unnecessarily to see that their vicinity should lead to no too conjugal consequences. On the morrow, M. le Duc returned to his governor, who continued to teach him grammar. I think I have related the debauch into which the poor little husband let himself be dragged, in order to prove openly that he was in a condition to comport himself properly with Madame la Duchesse. A longer separation was useless, and the wedded pair finally went to bed together in marital fashion.

Monsieur le Prince, to quote the expression of Madame de Grignan, was the great Condé's son "in his own despite, and in spite of all." He held war in abhorrence, and a volley of cannon

gave him the fever; in revenge the batteries of the kitchen filled him with no fear at all, and though he lived soberly as a rule, he often gathered together a company of men and women to substantial repasts. He was frail of body, of a pale complexion, with eyes of fire, which shone like glowing coals. His character offered the rarest contradictions. He had wit, and of the most exquisite kind; knowledge which surpassed that of the wisest by profession: with these fine qualities he would often spend whole hours in piling folly upon folly, or even pass the time in hiding what was good in him. At his death he left a reputation for parsimony, founded on a host of traits which seem to me reasonable enough; however, he engulfed millions at Chantilly, the embellishment of which he superintended himself. He spent more money on his amours than a King of France; he was even more prodigal in the magnificent *fêtes* which he invented with incomparable talent. Sometimes one found him a mean and grovelling flatterer; sometimes arrogant, proud, and insolent. When he wished to please, no one could rival his grace and charm; everybody was seduced by his golden words. He ill-treated his son and his daughters, as he had his father; he loved only himself, and but for that I think no one would have loved him.

His tyrannies have exposed him time after time to the odium of honest folk; it sufficed him to desire a thing to make him seek it at any cost. I will only mention his malevolence with regard to M. Rose. This secretary of the cabinet of the King (he had held the same post under Mazarin), was a little old man, frank and rough in his conduct of business. He possessed a well-built house near Chantilly, with a finely-arranged park. It was his earthly paradise. Monsieur le Prince conceived a desire for it, in order to extend his beloved Chantilly; but the good man, as M. Rose was dubbed, was firm both against his offers and his diabolical ruses.

"Mr. Fox," said the Prince to his obstinate neighbour, "I will send you your equals."

In fact, that same night, four hundred foxes, with fireworks tied to their tails, were sent into M. Rose's domain, where they caused such damage that a part of the trees were burnt. It was a trick borrowed from the Bible. M. Rose liked it no better for this; he sought out the King, and related to him M. le Prince's proceedings in detail. I have heard it said that the King could

refuse nothing to his old secretary, who knew all his secrets. This time he promised him satisfaction. He sent for M. le Prince, and said to him, with a laugh :

"I have been informed, Monsieur, of your imitation of Samson's foxes; but M. Rose, who is as well acquainted as yourself with the Holy Scriptures, intends to have a repetition of the same *fête* in your fine park at Chantilly."

M. le Prince, alarmed at this threat, consented to have the damage caused by his animals made good at his own expense. He never afterwards ventured to attack M. Rose, who, on his side, had more than one opportunity to be avenged on the Prince by his remarks. M. le Prince cannot escape the charge of cruelty towards his poor wife, who was virtuous and ugly. It seems incredible that this husband, so abandoned to gallantry himself, should have been seized with an open and furious jealousy of Madame la Princesse, the silliest of hunchbacks! In his place, I would have sooner burned a taper to anyone who would have relieved me of the tedium of my conjugal duties. This Princess was honestly pious, and her piety enabled her to support with a sad submission the insults and ill-treatment of M. le Prince, who, in his fits of temper, fell upon her with kicks and blows. I have heard it said that she was often bruised all over from them. He tormented her with fantasies which partook of the nature of madness; he sometimes ordered her to fast that she might atone for the sins which he committed himself with his mistresses. Of these he had several to the knowledge of his wife, who received them in her interior with much respect, in order to escape a beating. Madame de Marei, sister of Madame de Grancey, was one of those who cost him most in jewels and presents. He took no liberties with her until he had risen from table, when the wine and good cheer had set the powder on fire. Madame la Maréchale de Richelieu, who detested him as much as he adored her, drained him of his ready money; he even paid large sums to people ordered to spy upon all the actions of the lady, who, on her side, paid them also not to betray her. But as these wretches are without honour, one of them, in the hope of a large reward, revealed to M. le Prince what was passing in his absence. It was his favourite, the Comte de Roucy, who shared his mistress. The Prince fell into a furious rage, swore he would kill the unfaithful pair, and desired to see the extent of their

audacity with his own eyes. He thus deprived himself of the consolation of a doubt, after the familiarities of which he was the invisible witness. M. de Roucy quarrelled with the Maréchale, who had a most amorous and vindictive temperament. She had no thought save to be avenged on her lover, when M. le Prince arrived, and reproached her harshly and brutally with her iniquity.

"Monsieur," replied the masterly woman to him, without being intimidated, "you are mad, jealous, and blind."

"I might be, at any rate," said he; "I have seen too much not to be sure that you love the Comte."

"Love him! I can prove to you that I do not love him."

"In his place I should be satisfied with the proofs you have given him to the contrary."

"Well! post trusty people who will be ready to act; this evening I will bring him here secretly, and you will be incredulous indeed, if your suspicions do not die when he does."

"Madame, if it is thus you desert your friends, I will no longer expose myself to such practices; I will warn Roucy to be on his guard against your rendezvous."

In truth, he never again saw, save at a distance, this respectable lady, who would be revenged on God and the devil. The Comte de Roucy, greatly astonished at this generous conduct of the Prince, begged his pardon, which was granted him; but the first mistress he had was only faithful to him until the Prince's crowns had ordered it otherwise. This was his one reprisal. This mistress was the beautiful Duchess de Lude, who was maid-of-honour to the Duchess de Bourgogne. She was living there on her estates, less from preference than from motives of economy. I have never seen a more determined huntress; she rode on horseback like a man, tore through the woods and across the plains, and was after game from morning to night. She had the reputation of being most uncleanly, never washing herself, and using no perfumes; she passed her life in the stables, although she was lovely enough to please a King. She never surrendered to men, she said, except from weakness. Besides that, in the town as in the provinces, she had her recognised mistresses. The one whom she called *her Montespan* was not as cruel towards the provinces as she would have wished; this girl, who had the loveliest body in creation, sold herself to the Parisian procuresses.

Madame de Lude was ignorant of this, or she would have killed her. A poor country clerk, with formidable shoulders, seduced this handmaiden. Madame de Lude, who surprised him *flagrante delicto*, punished him in the place where he had sinned. The incident passed in her Château, and was related to me by the steward, who, in the lady's presence, treated the poor wretch like Abelard. The operation was performed with much care; the wound having healed, the patient was dismissed with a box containing the missing article. Was it not audacity for M. le Roucy and M. le Prince to have relations with such a woman?

Amongst the mistresses of M. le Prince, occurs the name of Madame de Nevers, the niece of Madame de Montespan, who, when she saw the King was cooling down towards her, intrigued in vain to transfer His Majesty's love to a person of her own family whom she would have under her thumb. The dazzling beauty of Madame de Nevers did not produce a like effect upon him as upon all the rest who saw her. The Montchevreuil, who was entrusted with the negotiations, did not employ sufficiently delicate methods; she went so far as to shut up Madame de Nevers in the King's chamber, who, if he touched her, showed no appearance of having done so. M. le Prince surpassed him in gallantry, in his passion for Madame de Nevers. They carried on a copious correspondence. M. de Nevers had too much wit to grow thin with jealousy; moreover, he would have wasted his time and trouble, and his charming wife would not have cared to turn prude and virtuous before the age of reason. M. de Nevers, however, obstinately set on his own wishes from the same reason that he did not thwart those of his wife, had a mania for starting for Rome, as deliberately as though he were going for a drive in the Allée de la Marne. It often happened that, having entered her carriage, Madame de Nevers heard her husband say to the coachman: *To Rome*. These impromptu journeys were horribly vexatious to her, because she had not the time to prepare fresh toilettes. One day she guessed that M. de Nevers was about to remove her from Paris to Rome; she warned M. le Prince, who promised to prevent this excursion of two hundred leagues. He addressed himself, therefore, not to the husband nor to the Duke, but to the poet. M. de Nevers, who recognised no rivals in lighter poetry but Hamilton and Chaulieu, attached much importance to his rhymes, which he strung together like

beads on a rosary. M. le Prince announced a *fête* at Chantilly, at which all the Court was eagerly looking forward to be present; he then feigned to be embarrassed to find a poet who would compose the devices and diversions.

"In truth," said M. de Nevers, to whom he unburdened himself, "you have found what you want. I will give up my journey to Rome, and my verses will dishonour me if they do not do you honour."

The *fête* cost the Prince a hundred thousand crowns, and Madame de Nevers remained at Paris. Methinks there was as much self-love as love shown in the incident.

Mademoiselle, known as the *Grande Mademoiselle* (to distinguish her from Monsieur's daughter), the daughter of Gaston, the granddaughter of Henri IV, had been the wealthiest heiress in Europe; she refused most illustrious offers, saying that kings bored her. When I saw her a few years before her death, she was rapidly approaching her sixtieth year, and was consoling herself for her love sorrows by writing memoirs, which she spiced with sentimentality, as though they were pastoral romances. She had a taste for all that approached the romantic. This caused her marriage with M. de Lauzun, who desired it to be celebrated at the King's mass. The Princes, who dreaded lest the enterprising genius of M. de Lauzun should lead to some extravagant ambition, moved heaven and earth to obtain the King's veto on the two lovers' espousals. M. de Lauzun, who had been vested by contracts with four of the finest duchies in the kingdom, let himself be led, in spite of the orders of Louis XIV, into a secret marriage. The coadjutor of Rheims revealed everything to the King, who had M. de Lauzun confined in the Bastille, then at Pignerol. Mademoiselle showed the utmost despair; she screamed, wept, and took to her bed; for many days she lived on nothing but broth. Madame de Montespan, who had contributed with all her efforts to M. de Lauzun's arrest, still visited the disconsolate Mademoiselle, who could not accustom herself to the absence of her dear Duc de Montpensier.

"But for you," she cried between her sobs, "he would be here, he would be here!" and she pointed to the place in her bed, which, perhaps, he had occupied.

M. de Lauzun suffered ten years of captivity, and was on the

point of death more than once—so much so, that he asked for a confessor, a Capucin, for fear lest a mock priest should be sent him. The Capucin having arrived, he plucked out part of his beard, to convince himself it was not a false one. Finally, he was promised his liberty, on condition that he abdicated the Duchies of Aumale and Dombes in favour of the Duc du Maine. Mademoiselle would have sacrificed all her riches to recover her beloved Lauzun. Madame de Montespan busied herself so actively, that the prisoner of Pignerol, tired of resistance, agreed to everything; he was set at liberty, restored to his Princess, but was still banished from the Court. The Duc du Maine, as a sign of gratitude for the gifts of Mademoiselle, also put on her livery. But ten years' absence had greatly changed that Lauzun, whose audacious love had subjugated the most rebellious heart in France; he could not, for all his courage, feign any love for a sexagenarian face, withered, wrinkled, and severe. He had not yet permission to show himself at Court, and, to improve the time, he gambled terrifically with Monsieur, who, as Madame de Cornuel said, would not have been happy in Paradise without cards or dice. One day, when M. de Lauzun was in a winning mood, he said loudly:

"When I lose, I have no resource but to court my old wife; to-night, at any rate, thanks to fortune, I shall sleep in peace."

Mademoiselle to whom the saying was reported, armed herself with an heroic resolve.

"Monsieur," she said to her husband, "your old wife will be delighted to know you are far away from here; I advise you, also, to be a little less confident of the inheritance of Mademoiselle."

In fact, Monsieur was later on her universal legatee. As for M. de Lauzun, he went to gamble in England, where the revolution brought him still further adventure.

CHAPTER XIII

DUBOIS PRESENTED TO THE KING AND MADAME DE MAINTENON
—A PIOUS EVENING—THE PERFUMES—ORIGIN OF DUBOIS'
FORTUNE—D'AUBIGNÉ, MADAME DE MAINTENON'S BROTHER
—HIS ECCENTRIC CONDUCT—HIS ACQUAINTANCES IN THE
TUILERIES—THE EARS OF PÈRE LA CHAISE—ARRIVAL OF
THE KING AND QUEEN OF ENGLAND—LA FONTAINE AND
THE ABBÉ GRÉCOURT—THE INTERVIEW AT CHATOU—RE-
CONCILIATION WITH LAUZUN—THE QUEEN'S WIT—GREAT-
NESS OF LOUIS XIV—PETTINESS OF JAMES II—MADAME
AND THE FALSE PRINCESSES PALATINE

WHEN I was presented to the King, he glanced at me, then turned his gaze away; my face was like any other face, and my name betrayed my base origin enough to make the smallest country squire turn up his nose. Afterwards, he addressed a few insignificant words to me, to which my best response was to courtesy to the ground. It was not until the occasion of the Duc de Chartres' wedding that he condescended to me from his pedestal. Having become, in some sort, the indispensable tail of my pupil, at the expense of the Marquis d'Arcy, who had nothing from his charge of governor but the title and the honours, I followed the Duc de Chartres everywhere, to church as well as to evil haunts, to his apartment and to the theatre. It was by this means that I introduced myself even into the presence of Madame de Maintenon. I will endeavour to recall, moreover, the persons I was accustomed to see there. My introduction to the Maintenon, who was already called Madame *Maintenance*, owing to the tyrannical empire she exercised over the King, is still present to my memory, and I regard it as the origin of my fortune.

It was, I think, at the beginning of the year 1689 that the Duc de Chartres was invited to a sort of charitable function in Madame de Maintenon's apartment. M. Huchon, Curé of Versailles, was to preach a sermon; Bossuet, Fénelon, Père

La Chaise were present; the Duc du Maine, Madame de Caylus, Madame de Heudicourt, the Cardinal de Noailles, Messieurs de Villiers, d'Harcourt, Montchevreuil, and others, the Court favourites, the bastards, and the King, who rubbed his hand, saying:

"Gentlemen, Madame de Maintenon and Père La Chaise promise us indulgences."

"We all require them with your Majesty," I answered.

The King, who did not like to be addressed where he had not put a question, turned his back on me. The Marquis d'Arcy took me by the hand and conducted me to the Maintenon, who was feeding the Duc de Bourgogne with sweetmeats.

"Madame," said the Marquis, "this is M. l'Abbé Dubois, who is sub-governor to the Duc de Chartres."

"Take care, M. Dubois," she said, "that your lessons profit him as much as they deserve."

"Thus far, Madame, I have nothing but praise to tell of M. le Duc de Chartres."

"One of these evenings you must make him maintain a thesis in our presence; I will admit to you that if he is quoted as a miracle of wit, his piety is not spoken of so favourably."

"If you will deign, Madame, to favour me with your advice, I will follow it."

"Good, M. l'Abbé; the occasion may, perhaps, arise, and we will put your talents to the test."

"From this moment, Madame, I consider myself in your service, and will devote myself thereto."

"What is your native place, M. Dubois?"

"Brives-la-Gaillarde in Limousin."

"Do you know that you have gone far in coming to the Palais-Royal?"

"With the aid of your protection, I feel assured I shall not stop where I am."

"I see you are ambitious."

"And patient, Madame."

"Believe me, the one quality without the other is but a fire of straw. However, I do not see where you hope to go when once the Prince is of age to dispense with a governor."

"Assuredly, I should be embarrassed, Madame, were there no barrettas and bishoprics in France."

Madame de Maintenon bit her lips to restrain her laughter. The King, seeing me in such close conference, drew near to discover its motive. All his life long he had had an invincible horror of perfumes, which he discerned from afar with singular tact of smell. He often said to Madame de Montespan:

"Fie on all your scents! One would think you put on nice ones to conceal a nasty. What is the good of embalming yourself in your lifetime?"

Madame de Maintenon, who exhaled a strong odour of musk or amber, was the despair of the King, who reproached everybody except herself with steeping themselves in perfumes. Madame alone at Court had a free tongue. She said to the King, one day when he was scolding her for scenting herself:

"Sire, I know of no other perfumes to cleanse me but river water, cold and pure. As for Madame, all the perfumery she employs will not prevent us smelling the widow of Scarron the Cripple."

This was the origin of that railing hatred which always existed between these two ladies. The King, then, having taken a few steps towards me, stopped short, distended his nostrils, and cried, stamping his foot:

"The Devil! have we the plague here? These women would think themselves aggrieved if they did not fill their pockets with scents! Is that not so, Madame?"

"Sire," replied the Maintenon, without losing countenance, "the smell of benzoin is enough to make one faint."

"Yes, indeed," added the old satyr, Fagon, "we were better treated at Lavienne's, the bather, where there was a pretty enough consumption of aromatics."

"It must be Madame la Dauphine, who has worn perfumed wigs ever since she was last brought to bed."

"I vow to you, Madame," cried the Dauphine, "that I do not know what you mean."

"It is Madame then," resumed the Maintenon, with a smile.

"If it is I," replied the Princess Palatine, "I consent to be stoned, on condition that Madame de Maintenon throw the first stone."

"Cease this discussion, if you please," said the King, taking hold of Louvois' arm; "let he or she who has these drugs go out instantly, or I will leave the place to him."

I saw every face blanch, and everyone throwing glances of accusation at his neighbour. Madame de Maintenon, in spite of her queenly authority, gave way to a secret uneasiness, and, her eyes being fixed on me, I understood what she expected from my devotion.

"Sire," I cried, "do not overwhelm me with your anger."

"Pardon this poor man," interrupted the favourite, who foresaw my device; "he was probably unaware of your prohibition."

"What, Abbé!" said the Duc de Chartres, "'tis you who smell like a lily of the valley?"

"Why wait such a time before you tell us?" continued Louis XIV, stopping his nose. "Come, take yourself off."

"Sire," I answered, walking towards the door backwards, "I must have touched some chemical compound whilst working just now with His Royal Highness."

"Practise chemistry as much as you like," said the King, "but do not come and infect us with it here."

"Follow your governor," said the Maintenon to the Duc de Chartres, "since it incommodes the King; the making of a savant is not all roses."

"Come, Dubois," retorted the Duc, "come and let us console ourselves for our exile by reading the Aeneid travestied by that queer rogue Scarron."

The King frowned, and almost went so far as to raise his stick against a Prince of the Blood. The Court was dumfounded at the audacity of these words, and the Duc du Maine said aloud: "This Abbé gives my cousin Chartres a fine education."

I burst out in just reproaches against my rebellious pupil, who sent me roundly to the devil. This imprudence would have made me lose my place, if Madame de Maintenon had not been on my side. Her gratitude did not stop there, for on the morrow I received the two perfumed gloves she had been wearing, but filled with gold pieces, with this Voiturean note, which might have excited the envy of the Hotel Rambouillet: "To recompense that for which you put on the gloves."

I was tempted to believe in fairy-tales. Madame de Maintenon was large in her liberalities, and as long as she was willing to be useful to me, I remained faithfully attached to her.

D'Aubigné, the brother of Madame de Maintenon, was all that was most eccentric, bold, and amusing. He bore the stigmata of

his libertine exploits—red eyes and a pimply skin. "*Fructus belli*," he would say to ladies who made fun of his face. "I was handsome when I was young; now that I am old, I still think myself young, if not beautiful." He had been through several campaigns, and had attained no higher rank than that of Captain of Infantry. He spoke of his battles, his wounds, and his feats of arms with such exaggeration, that a cit, who heard him talking in the Tuileries, asked if he was Turenne or the great Condé. He had been nominated in turn Governor of Bedford, of Aigues-Mortes, of Cognac, and of Berry, and he complained that his brother-in-law, the King, treated him so scurvily, and did not make him a Marshal of France, although he had two hands and feet like so many others. He was a gulf for money; he would have ruined the Emperor of Japan, and the considerable sums he extracted were dissipated on women and gaming. One day, when he was playing against M. de Vivonne, after having lost all he possessed, he wished to play a hundred thousand crowns on parole.

"D'Aubigné," said M. de Vivonne, laughing, "you are as careless of money as a Marshal of France."

"Certainly, my Marshal's *bâton* is still in the King's treasury; I preferred it to be all gold, and I don't perceive that it grows any less."

When he was without a farthing of ready money, he repaired to his sister, and said to her, in language even more energetic than I repeat:

"Do you suppose, Madame Scarron, that I suffer you in His Majesty's bed, if you don't throw in my eyes to make me blind, the dust of a dukedom and a peerage?"

"Miserable sinner," said Madame de Maintenon, "will you never repent?"

"Indeed I will, when I am fit for nothing else; in the meantime, give me the wherewithal to do honour to Madame la Marquise de Maintenon."

"Fie, my brother! Never call me Marquise."

D'Aubigné held his Court at the Tuileries, provoking the women and haggling over his conquests. When he encountered some agreeable face he went off to live for a fortnight in a family he did not know. His caprice once satisfied, he departed elsewhere, as long as his money lasted. He never reappeared at

Versailles till his purse was empty, and his impertinences did not spare the King, who said: "When that madman, d'Aubigné, is in the gallery, I dare not show myself." As for wit, he had a fund of it, and did not spare it.

I was present at a most diverting scene, at a time when I was one of the faithful of Madame de Maintenon. M. de Meaux, Père La Chaise, and some others were conversing of pious works and of the Convent of Saint-Cyr, when d'Aubigné entered, half-drunk, with his hose tumbled below his haunches.

"Zounds," he burst out, "I find you singular, sister, in your choice of company. Black robes conduce to melancholy, and piety and cant is poor stuff. I have spent the whole night merry-making, and have had a belly-full. You, on the other hand, have been foolish enough to quit your joyous way of life. When you were only the widow of that good fellow Scarron, the jolly suppers you had with the Villarceaux were something to see. Word of honour! it is mighty absurd to have changed all that for a prudery which deceives nobody."

"Sir," cried Madame de Maintenon in anger, "go and make these impious statements somewhere else; leave the room, or I will call my people."

And, as he did not budge, she added, with more irritation:

"Outside, Monsieur! Do you not hear me?"

"Nay, dear sister, Père La Chaise has stolen my ears."

In spite of the respect in which they held that personage, all present started laughing, for the ears of Père La Chaise were celebrated for their size.

I was a witness, like all the Court, of the arrival of the King and Queen of England, which took place in the early days of 1689. I was the first to draw the courtiers' attention to the piteous countenance of James II, who, as Louvois said to his brother the archbishop, lost three kingdoms for a mass. M. de Lauzun, who had chivalrously gone to London, played a part in the last acts of this royal progress; he remained faithful to the King when all abandoned him, and served him with his sword and counsels. The greatest service which he rendered him was in conducting the Queen and Prince of Wales to France through fifty Dutch vessels. I would not swear that the little Prince ever issued from the womb of the Queen, and I have heard more than once that he had been introduced under the

coverlet of the *accouchée* in a warming-pan. These supposititious children are happy political frauds in hereditary monarchies, where they may save a revolution. Here it was labour lost. William, instead of waiting peaceably for the heritage of his father-in-law, went to claim it before his death. James, pressed on all sides by the Dutch troops, decided upon flight. One Sunday in the month of December, his devotions over, he dismissed all his servants, and advised his last partizans to turn towards the rising sun of his rival. After which, he lay for an hour with his wife, the better to take leave of her. He next ordered the person who was standing at the door to be admitted. M. de Lauzun entered.

"Monsieur," said the King, "I confide the Queen and my son to you; there needs must be great risks to run to conduct all that is dearest to me to the Court of my cousin the King of France. God be with you, M. de Lauzun!"

The latter, romantic in his actions as in his speech, thanked the King for what he termed a happiness, and asked his permission to have the company of a gentleman of Avignon, Saint-Victor, I believe, who was as brave as deserving. He wrapped up the Prince of Wales in his mantle, and gave his hand to the Queen, who was followed by two nurses. They had chosen expressly raiment so common that the master of the ship which conveyed them, did not suspect what august passengers he had on board. M. de Lauzun, moreover, was there, his hand on his dagger, fully prepared to force him to his duty. Finally, they dropped anchor at Calais, and the Queen, who was a miracle of wit, beautiful still, and well-made, displayed so much gratitude towards her cavalier, in terms of such familiarity, that Mademoiselle was jealous.

Meanwhile, a thousand sinister reports were circulated about the King of England; some said that he had been slain, others that he was drowned; they were talking of shipwreck, of assassination, of a victory, I know not what, when M. Charost's courier arrived, announcing the Queen's arrival at Calais. This gave us patience to await fresh news of the King; in fact, on the Wednesday in January it was being said that James II was a prisoner, when M. de Louvois arrived, breathless, laughing, flushed, and absorbed in his embassy. He spoke apart to the King, who cried aloud:

"His Britannic Majesty is at Boulogne."

The mass was at once forgotten; everyone quitted his bench, came and went; the ladies kissed one another; you could not hear yourself speak. The priest, astonished at the commotion, thought the Château was on fire, and stopped in the middle of the Creed. Monseigneur said to Madame:

"See the heart of the French."

"There is more smoke than fire," said the Princess.

At last the Père La Chaise asked for a *Te Deum*, which was accepted with transport, and sung by every voice. M. de Meaux said, on leaving:

"We have committed an infidelity to God."

On the morrow, after breakfast, the King left Versailles, accompanied by the whole Court and all his family. It was competition as to who would show the greatest zeal. The bodyguards, the gendarmes, the light horse, and the musketeers, with ensigns flowing and trumpets sounding, gave an air of triumph to the festival. The cold was keen, in spite of a fine winter sunshine. I was in the Duc de Chartres' carriage with the Marquis d'Arcy and La Fontaine, who had come to ask the Prince if he might mount behind his carriage; he had him placed in the interior by his side, and recited his *Tales* to him.

"Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "there is a young canon who is more successful than I am in that manner."

"A canon!" interposed the Prince.

"Certainly," I put in; "that kind of folk has a wit rendered more enlightened than the rest, owing to its numerous fasts."

"You are quite right," said La Fontaine, "the man of whom I speak is named Grécourt, and he is a droll dog, who knows the litanies of Cythera."

Thereupon he began to retail to us, with all the gravity in the world, a thousand rhymed indecencies, which made us cry with laughter. He soon passed without any transition to his own verses, and asked us if it would not be proper to offer a volume of his *Contes* to the Queen of England.

"She does not know the French language in a dressing-gown," said M. d'Arcy.

"Ah well, Monsieur, I will do better; I will show it her in the nude."

"She would not understand you," said the Prince.

"She would understand you too well," I added.

The King judged fit to halt near Chatou, in a large open place forming a square, into which several roads led. The troops were drawn up in a circle, the carriages in a line, and we waited impatiently for a good quarter of an hour.

"A plague on it!" said the Duc de Chartres; "my kinswoman of England must be mighty worshipful to make us brave this terrible cold!"

The burgesses of Paris, men and women, eye-gapers by nature, had run up with cries of *Vive le Roi*, flinging their caps into the air. They would have adventured themselves amongst the guards if they had been allowed. The Prince of Wales was the first to arrive. The King, as soon as he perceived his carriage in the distance, descended from his own, and all followed his example. Louis XIV, bare-headed, saluting all the ladies, bore that day an air of grace and majesty more striking even than was his wont. He said to Madame de Maintenon, in a moved voice:

"I feel now that all kings are brothers."

"They are often *hostile brothers*," answered Madame de Maintenon.

The carriage of the Prince of Wales having come to a stop, the King himself opened the door, saying:

"It is my part to pay the first visit."

He took his child in his arms, kissed him, caressed him, and passed him to the ladies, who struggled for him, and went into ecstasies over his beauty. The King went a few steps to meet the Queen of England, who had hastened to leave her carriage. They saluted with tears in their eyes, and the Princess addressed these words to him:

"Sire, you see an unfortunate Princess, who hopes for no consolation save in your Majesty's goodness."

"Madame, in giving you asylum I do you but a sorry service, but I hope in the future to render you greater ones."

"Whatever happens, Sire, the Crown of England must depend on that of France; I put the Prince of Wales under your protection."

The cold brought the interview to an end; the King made the Queen of England sit in his carriage on his right hand, presented

Monsieur and Monseigneur to her, who also entered the carriage, and the cortège returned to Saint-Germain, where they arrived at four o'clock.

The King was the first to descend; he gave his hand to the Queen of England, and, accompanied by the Princes, conducted her to the late Queen's apartment, which she was to occupy. The Prince of Wales was introduced to his own, which was that of the Duc de Bourgogne.

"Madame," said the King, with a sigh, pointing out the places which his wife had inhabited, "if the late Madame Marie-Thérèse of Austria is still interested in us, from the heaven whither her soul has gone, she cannot but be flattered to see her place occupied by another Marie so beautiful and so virtuous."

"Sire," replied the Queen, "in her you have suffered an irreparable loss."

People marvelled at the grace and wit of this Princess; every word she said was repeated. She was, in truth, of remarkable beauty, although somewhat pale, with superb contours, and magnificent eyes. She had the prettiest hands, and there was a rivalry as to who should kiss them. She spoke with great purity and ease; to see her so composed in her manners, as in her speech, one would have deemed she had never left the Court of France. M. de Lauzun had not arrived in time enough to assist at the interview; thus he happened to be there, with a face showing much emotion, when the King passed. He uttered an exclamation which well counterfeited enthusiasm, and began by essaying his old habits as a favourite; he threw his hat and gloves at the feet of the King, who said to him, with mock kindness:

"My dear Peguilehem, you know that I am no longer of an age to have favourites, although always friends, and you are of their number."

"Sire," answered M. de Lauzun, repressing his familiarity, "I am too happy to see your Majesty again."

"So you have been through perils? But you have acted like a hero; in future you will go no more to London."

"Sire, my fidelity to the King of England is more recent than that I owe to you."

After these words, the King passed with the Queen into a private cabinet, where they were closeted for two hours; such is

the malevolence of courtiers that they doubted if they had spent all that time in the discussion of affairs, and I mind me there was talk of it in the streets. At the end of this long conference the Queen was escorted back to the Prince of Wales's apartment, and the King, highly satisfied with his day, returned to Versailles with the Court.

On the day after the installation of the Queen of England at Saint-Germain, it was announced that the King of England was arriving in the carriages which had been sent for him to Clermont. With the fall of night, the King left Versailles and repaired to the Queen, who received him in bed, excusing herself on the ground of fatigue. About six o'clock James II appeared, lit by a great number of torches; the Court was drawn up in silence to salute him on his descent from his carriage; the Chevalier de Saint-Deaude, lieutenant of the bodyguard, had been appointed by the King to serve his person.

"Monsieur," said James II to him, "I could not have made a better choice."

He encountered Lauzun, who was about to fall on one knee before him; he raised him and embraced him several times.

"Here is a good friend whom I am overjoyed to see again," he said aloud. He did not leave go of his hand, and went up the stairs with him; he found the King of France at the door of the guard-room.

"Sire!" he cried in a trembling voice; and, as he bowed respectfully, Louis XIV opened his arms and pressed him tenderly to his heart, in such fashion that they remained for several minutes in each other's arms.

"I could not feel more joy than I do," said the King of France, "in having your Majesty."

"Ah, Sire, I owe my life to you, and that of my wife and son, and it has not been your fault that I do not owe you my kingdom."

"We will give it back to you; but let us waste no time; the Queen burns with impatience to see your Majesty."

"Sire, here is my protector," resumed the King of England, pointing to Lauzun, "and I pray your Majesty to grant him all your friendship in return for the succour I have received from him."

"It is well; it is enough that such is your Majesty's good pleasure. Lauzun, try to appease Mademoiselle."

He took the King of England by the arm, and keeping him always on his right, escorted him to the apartment of the Queen, who gave a cry when the King said to her :

"I bring you the man you have been expecting with so much anxiety."

She almost swooned away with joy, and remained for a long time in the arms of her husband, whom she had thought dead. Then followed floods of tears which seemed never like to dry. The Prince of Wales was summoned, whom his father kissed and wept over; the King of France caressed the child with all possible gentleness.

"Sire," said the Queen, "I had envied the happy lot of my son, who is not of an age to feel his misfortunes; but how I should feel inclined to pity him, that he cannot feel your Majesty's goodness to him."

"May your Majesty retain this feeling," added James II, "he has great need of it."

The King sent for Madame de Maintenon, who presented herself with inflated majesty, and was received without great ceremony.

"I was waiting," she said, smiling with a queenly air, "until your Majesty should admit me to her presence."

"Madame," replied the Queen, with a laughing face, "it would have been the greater loss to me, in that I have no livelier desire than to meet you; I beg you to show us the same kindness that His Majesty displays."

After some instants of compliments, the Princes of the Blood were admitted; Monseigneur and Monsieur also embraced the King of England, who was so pleased that he would have embraced the very pages. They asked him for a recital of what had happened, and, fearing to refuse, he submitted his English eloquence to a rude test; he not only spoke French ill, but he had a horrible stammer, and the ill-natured said that the first thing he needed was a teacher of grammar; for his wits and his tongue grew so embarrassed with his story that he ended with a gape, and looked so foolish that the King took pity on him, and gave orders to start for Versailles, after having said to him :

"Your Majesty is at home here; you will permit me often to come and visit you, and I hope you will come and see me also at Versailles."

Such was the two days' interview; then people ceased to speak of it. The generosity and greatness which Louis XIV displayed on this occasion was specially admired: a casket containing six thousand pistols was given to the Queen on the day of her arrival, one of ten thousand to the King, and six hundred thousand crowns were set aside yearly for their household. The Queen's wit was greatly praised; her least repartees were quoted as masterpieces, amongst others these words, which she uttered on seeing the discipline of the King's guards :

"Sire," she said, "these are admirable troops; but what I admire the most is their fidelity to your Majesty."

She gave him to understand by this that her own had betrayed her. As for the King of England, a few days sufficed to render him insignificant and ridiculous. After visiting the Princes and M. de Lauzun, he could think of nothing better than to haunt the houses of the Jesuits, which caused people to say that he was one himself, and of this I have no doubt. He flung himself at the head of all the priests who wanted him, and the Court fell away. His face promised nothing it did not bear out; old and withered, worn with sorrow, he had the look of a penitent, and to become altogether discredited, it only wanted his unprofitable descent upon Ireland. His second advent to France, at bottom deserving pity, only inspired satirical couplets; and his death, which occurred as the result of all these reverses, made less noise than that of some petty provincial gentleman. He had prayed to God that he might die on a Friday, and this grace was granted him.

It was about this time, I think, that a burlesque incident happened which scandalised the King and amused the Court. One morning, when I was walking in the garden of Versailles with the young Massillon, of whom I shall have more to say, I saw Madame coming towards me, in full toilette, and in a fury that is hard to describe.

"Have you seen them?" she said to us, clenching her fists.

"Who, pray, Madame?" we answered with one voice, astonished to see the Duchesse d'Orléans alone and in such a plight.

"The strumpets of Strasbourg!" she said, with her German frankness. "Imagine, gentlemen, what the Dauphine came to tell me this morning with tears in her eyes. The old woman knows to what a degree I hold to the honour of my family, the

noblest and most ancient of all that occupy European thrones. Well, to grieve and dishonour me, she has brought two women of the town from Strasbourg; whom she passes off for Countesses Palatine. That is nothing; but she has placed them in the position of attendants to the Caylus, her niece, and she goes about everywhere plotting against me; she has dared to say in the apartment that the Palatine crop grew in every soil."

"Madame, what are you going to do?" interposed Massillon.

"Do not be uneasy; when I am in the right, I mock at the old witch; but in which direction did they pass? I saw them from my window, and I am going to tear the schemers' masks off." She was finishing when she saw the two German girls facing her, in the company of Madame de Caylus. She called them in imperious tones, and asked them:

"Who are you?"

"I am Countess of Lutzelstein," replied the youngest.

"By the left hand, no doubt?"

"No, Madame, I am no bastard; the young Count Palatine legitimately married my mother, who is of the house of Gehlen."

"If that were so, poor wretch, you would have no right to call yourself Countess Palatine; for, in our family, *mésalliances* are not recognised. But you lie, I am sure of it; the Count Palatine never married your mother; he may have been in bed with her, as he was with many others."

"Madame, be calm; what have I done to you, that you should overwhelm me with abuse?"

"Listen, if for the future you give yourself out as a Princess Palatine, I will have your petticoats cut and yourself whipped by lackeys."

"Madame, Madame, pardon me."

"I am well aware the Maintenon is the cause of this deception. Be off; resume your old method of life, your mother's; but let me hear you no more spoken of except as an impudent hussy."

A number of persons hastened up at the sound of this unbecoming quarrel; Louvois was not the last to inform himself of what had occurred, in order to acquaint Madame de Maintenon. The two girls wept; he approached the prettier of them, spoke aside to her, and led her away. I have heard that he kept her, until his death, under another name; the girl grew rich in the profession. The other was struck so suddenly by Madame's

threats, that she took to her bed in a fever and died two days later. Madame de Maintenon, who had devised all this mischief, told the King that Madame was responsible for the death of a Princess Palatine. The King only laughed at it; he merely said to Madame, jokingly:

"It is not prudent to jest on the subject of your house; I think he who would be a Palatine runs a risk of his life with you."

"Sire, I am not fond of deceptions," she answered rudely, her gaze fixed on Madame de Maintenon. Massillon told me afterwards that if he were a Prince Palatine he would not boast of it.

CHAPTER XIV

NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE DUC DE CHARTRES—
THE SECRET DOOR—PÈRE LA CHAISE—THE NOCTURNAL
RENDEZVOUS—COMPACT OF DUBOIS WITH MADAME DE MAIN-
TENON—HE PREPARES THE MARRIAGE OF THE DUC DE
CHARTRES—MADEMOISELLE DE BLOIS—DUBOIS WITH MADAME
—HER ANGER—THE INTERVIEW WITH THE KING—DUBOIS
RETIRES DURING THE REJOICINGS

MONSIEUR, seeing the dissipated conduct of his son, was sighing over his inability to marry him. Europe was in a blaze of general war; it was not the moment to ask for the hands of Princesses, unless one went to seek them in Siam. Madame, wrapped around in her German prejudices, only hoped for some Palatine scarecrow for the Duc de Chartres; and the latter regarded any alliance at all as detrimental to his pleasures. But the Palatinate, ravaged by the armies of Louis XIV in the war of succession, had not yet been reduced to make peace under exorbitant conditions. Monsieur resigned himself, therefore, to seek a bride for his son in his brother's Court. The Princesse de Conti, recently left a widow, had the wherewithal to please a second husband. Lovely, witty, and still young, she would have been perfect if her title of natural daughter of the King had not revolted the pride of the Duchesse d'Orléans, who was mighty curious to any unequivocal nobility. However, she was softened by the reflection that the Prince de Conti had taken her as his wife; in her eyes, this was a sort of rehabilitation; the qualities and vast fortune of the Princess enabled her to forget that she was the daughter of Mademoiselle de La Vallière. Monsieur undertook to negotiate the marriage, to which, at the outset, the Princess did not seem opposed; the Duc de Chartres, whom it suited them not to inform of this project of alliance, none the less continued to pay his court to the Princess, without knowing that he was committing in advance an infidelity to himself. Matters were thus, and only the King's approval was required

CHAPTER XIV

131

(that of the Prince did not disturb Monsieur), when the Princesse de Conti answered drily that everything was broken off, and she wished to retain her freedom. A word from Louis XIV had abolished these hopes of union; the Chevalier de Lorraine and his brother had been for three years in the confidence of another project, of which I was to secure the success.

One evening, tired of following the tracks of a humble beauty, whom the Prince had stalked at the Opera, I returned to the hotel with the firm intention of resting from my labours. I was in an angry temper that night, it wanted little but that, having already beaten my servant, I did not fall upon myself. There was a gentle knock at the secret door which opened into a wardrobe for the use and convenience of my mistresses. By this means they had no need to cross the ante-chamber under the impudent eyes of the lackeys. Although I felt in no condition to do justice to myself in a *tête-à-tête*, I opened, nevertheless, hoping to cool my blood in an unfettered interview. What was my surprise to see instead of a woman Père La Chaise enter.

I had already encountered the famous Jesuit at Court, but, whether for pride on his side or awkwardness on mine, I had not yet addressed a word to him. His face had a character so grotesque, and at the same time so subtle, that it would have been recognisable amongst a thousand. Big eyes, almost on a level with his forehead, rolling stupidly beneath the heavy brows; a foolish smile stretched over a monkish face; ears that hung almost to his shoulders; a halting and tortuous gait: thus the man. Many of his penitents, Madame de Maintenon amongst them, have assured me that he had all the virtues; but I conceive that his gentleness was a mask, his kindness a snare, and his humanity a lie; I have always judged him to be a hypocrite. Thus the Jesuits, in order to thank him for his good offices, have made a saint of him after his death. He was penetrated with the duties of his Order, which seeks to extend its dominion at all costs, and although his wit was mean enough, he possessed the graces of his estate to such a degree that he employed them most successfully to dominate his penitent. He was always the first to be informed of the operations of the ministers, and Louvois, who was not the man to give himself fetters or masters, understood that he had to base his power on that of the King's confessor. It was he who dictated the warnings of the tribunal of penance,

and Père La Chaise served him as an instrument on all the occasions when he had to stand up and thwart Louis XIV. Père La Chaise constituted himself the spokesman of Heaven with a persuasiveness which was worth as many presents and benefices to him as he desired. Madame de Maintenon was too skilful a politician to separate herself from the Jesuits and the confessor; on the contrary, she spared neither pains nor money to attach the Père La Chaise, and he even sacrificed Louvois to her. Persons who have known the interior of Madame de Maintenon, allege that she won over the good father by means which cost her little, and that Louvois' disgrace was due to the fact of his having surprised the King's confessor in the exercise of very different functions to those of his charge. Calumny is so ready to attack the great, that it is always associated with truth.

"Abbé," said Père La Chaise to me, motioning to me with his hand not to utter his name, "do not be astonished that I have visited you myself; it concerns a grave and urgent matter."

"Speak, Monseigneur," I said, bidding him be seated; "no one can hear us."

"I would not rely on that, my son; besides, it is not I who have to question you. You are not a Jesuit?"

"No, not actually; but I practise the principles of the Order in which I was brought up."

"Very well; take the oath, and you will be a Jesuit; then we shall have confidence in you."

He made me swear to observe, before all things, the laws of the General of the Order, and I swore all that he wished.

"Now I can count on your inviolate zeal," said he; "remember moreover, that your life depends on your silence. Betake yourself, immediately, to Versailles, to the courtyard of the chapel of the Château; there you will hear what there is to do."

I wished to risk a few questions, which met with no response save a severe injunction to repair to the spot indicated. Promises of recompense decided me, and, reassured by the character of Père La Chaise, who would not have wished to decoy me into an ambush, I did not even take the time to change my toilette. I descended with the King's confessor, who saw me into a carriage, after having given me his benediction. My fears ceased immediately with the reflection that the affair must needs be of importance, if Père La Chaise were mixed up in it. Indeed, had the

intimation reached me from a source more suspicious, I should not have exposed myself to this nocturnal rendezvous. I arrived shortly before midnight, and, as I was known to the guards of the gate, I made a pretence of going towards the new buildings where the Duc de Chartres' apartments were situated; then I suddenly entered the little courtyard of the chapel, which I found open. I had not long to wait. A small veiled woman, whom I recognised as Balbieu, the old serving-woman of Madame de Maintenon, escorted me to the latter's room by a small staircase. Madame de Maintenon was in bed; she was not asleep, but reading dispatches, with which her bed was strewn. I perceived, from the expressive glance she cast at me, that it was she who had summoned me. The Balbieu brought me a chair and withdrew. I could not believe my eyes, and it seemed to me that I was in the deception of a dream; then returning to my accustomed ideas, at the sight of the perfumed bed and what it contained, I supposed myself on the highway to a conquest obtained at the expense of a greater than myself. I flattered myself that Madame de Maintenon had heard speak of the Duc de Chartres' preceptor, in terms and under relations which had piqued her curiosity. Oh, the vanity of men!

"Monsieur l'Abbé," she said to me, "I have forewarned you that one might have need of you, and the moment has come for you to bring to light the skill with which you are credited."

"Madame," I answered, still uncertain as to the tone I ought to adopt, "there is nothing I would not do to deserve . . ."

"The gratitude which you will obtain. But before opening my heart to you, I beg you to refrain from any indiscretion which might be your ruin."

"Madame, the kindness you show me is enough, without my making a parade of it."

"It concerns an affair of State, and the honour of the King is implicated. His Majesty wishes to give his daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois, to the Duc de Chartres."

"Ah! Madame, with what joy will not the Prince accept the alliance!"

"You think so? Madame, however, obstinately set, as she is, on her Palatine nobility, which is not worth even that of the d'Aubignés, has openly declared against the 'Bastards,' as she

calls them; and I know that we must drag a consent out of her to this marriage."

"We shall have it, Madame, since I answer to you for that of the Duc de Chartres."

"That is what we expect of you; I have been informed that you had the Prince's confidence, no matter at what price, and I have looked to you to prepare him to obey the King."

"If I have acquired any influence over my pupil, I will employ it in your service."

"Make haste; the Chevalier de Lorraine and M. de Marsan have brought Monsieur to the point of saying that he will be only moderately annoyed at this alliance; when the Prince is determined, the thing will be done, and we will let the Bavarian woman scream till she chokes."

"Madame, if I may be allowed to choose my recompense, I venture to beg you to make it exactly similar to that of the Chevalier de Lorraine."

"You ask the impossible, Abbé; the Chevalier was paid in advance three years ago, when he received the orders of the King, as also his brother; he will have in addition two Abbeys. I promise you as much."

"Madame, you offer me a stepping-stone to the Cardinalate."

"Let our understanding never be disclosed; Madame is mischievous, and her attacks are not the less dangerous because they are hidden. To-morrow night you will come and give me an exact account of what you have done."

I had soon decided upon what steps to take in order to gain my Abbeys and the esteem of Madame de Maintenon, who described to me the immense dowry which the Duc de Chartres might expect. On the day after this mysterious interview, I repaired at an early hour to the Palais-Royal, and I wore such a diplomatic expression that the Prince cried:

"I foresee you have some purchase to propose to me; you could not fall more seasonably; the King has made me a present of a purse of two thousand louis for a new-year's gift."

"Indeed," said I, "there is a purchase in question; only it is you they wish to buy."

"Abbé, I am not fond of fools who jest."

"It is not a question of fools, Monseigneur, since the King offers to pay you what you are worth."

"To the devil with your precious jargon!"

"More precious than you think, since I offer you, with the full authority of the King, the hand of Mademoiselle de Blois . . ."

"Are you jesting? Or do you happen to be drunk this morning?"

"No more than you are, Monseigneur, and I beg you to accept with a good will, if you would not be forced to accept."

"To marry, Dubois? And it is you who advise that!"

"Why not; marriage is only a yoke so long as one cares to submit to it; you need only consider it in connection with the interest you find in it."

"What an outrage, to sacrifice my youth! 'Tis the first time in my life that I reflect on the insipid custom of sleeping always with the same woman, whom one often detests simply for that very reason."

"I guarantee, Monseigneur, that that condition will not be stipulated in the contract. Permit me to speak to you in the language of sincere friendship; by this entirely political marriage you bind closer your links of relationship with the King, you draw nearer the throne; it is within the bounds of probability that you may some day reach it . . ."

"Fine probability—the deaths of five or six young and healthy persons!"

"Indeed! As though it were only the sick who die! From another side, without weighing the amount of the dowry in the balance, you have the chance of recovering the Palatinate."

"Yes; burnt, pillaged, and made a desert by the armies of my father-in-law."

"Finally, he threatens to command it; he does not know such a thing as a refusal; not to obey with a good grace is at once to expose yourself to his resentment. To consent with a good will, however, assures you his friendship; and I repeat to you, because I am too much attached to you to think otherwise, that everything counsels you to consent."

"But, Dubois, Mademoiselle de Blois is a natural child. . . ."

"Legitimatised; and, as for that; will you be more scrupulous than the late Prince de Conti and Monsieur le Duc? Do not begin to share a prejudice of Madame, who has not yet shed all her German green-sickness. The bastards of a King of France are worth all the legitimate children of a Palatine

Electeur. To conclude, is it nothing to have a pretty wife when so many others have ugly ones?"

"I have seen Mademoiselle de Blois several times, but have never paid any attention to her."

"You will have ample leisure after the ceremony."

This sufficiently free conversation, in which I had beaten the Prince on every point, left him in a gloom which was merely due to his disgust at seeing his dreams of a well-employed youth frustrated. The sour air of Monsieur convinced me that the Chevalier de Lorraine had not lost time. Towards midnight, I was again introduced into Madame de Maintenon's chamber, where I found Père La Chaise, who embraced me as a colleague. There was more embracing when I related the success of my operations.

"My dear Dubois," said the confessor, "God will reward you for your zeal."

"Yes; through the hands of Madame," I replied, smiling at Madame de Maintenon.

"Do you think it time," she asked, "for the King to act? He does not wish to appear in the affair, as you know, until he is sure of not meeting with a refusal."

"Madame," I replied, "M. le Duc de Chartres has already resolved to do what you like, but I know him well enough to desire him to see Mademoiselle de Blois first. She is said to be very beautiful."

"Who says that, pray?" retorted Madame de Maintenon; "she is a bad likeness of her mother; moreover, amongst princes, marriages do not depend on these trifles. Nevertheless, let the Duc de Chartres pay me a visit to-morrow; I will see that Mademoiselle de Blois is here."

The Prince, since my confidences, was giving way to a melancholy indifference, instead of profiting by the liberty which was left him. He consented to come to Madame de Maintenon, but with an indifference which grieved me so much that, had it not been for the disgrace of returning the money I had received, I should have united with him to oppose this marriage. The interview was cold and constrained; Mademoiselle de Blois struck me by her excessive shyness, and the Duc de Chartres did nothing to appease it; Madame de Maintenon charged herself with the questions and answers. The memory which has remained

with me of Mademoiselle de Blois is confused with the judgment I formed subsequently of Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans, after a closer acquaintance; I am afraid that the portrait I give of her may bear traces of my more recent observations.

Mademoiselle de Blois was, at this date, in her fifteenth year, and the physique had taken precocious developments with her at the expense of the moral qualities. She struck one as of moderate stature and badly built; her eyes had something of the King's about them; the mouth and teeth, the complexion and the bust attracted my attention, and although each of these features was really good, the union of them was unpleasing. It was her air of constraint, her perpetual blushes, her awkward tongue, which did not meet my approval, and I saw that the Prince shared my sentiments. It is true that she has greatly changed since then, and her mind has gained as much as she has lost in beauty. But I already suspected her predominant failing when I saw her lying so negligently across the knees of Madame de Maintenon, who was calling her her child. The Duc d'Orléans said to me on leaving:

"I shall have a hard task to wake the wits of that!"

"Leave it to time," I answered, without putting faith in my counsel.

Rumours began to circulate, and Madame was informed by her spies that something was being plotted against her. As the marriage of the Duc du Maine with her daughter had been previously projected, she imagined this to be still in question; and as it was reported to her that I went secretly by night to Madame de Maintenon, she suspected me of being the promoter of this infamy. She said this to Madame de Châteauthiers, her favourite. I was summoned in great haste, and ventured to confront the storm.

"Do you not blush, Monsieur l'Abbé?" she cried, when I entered.

"Madame, I shall only blush when I receive my Cardinal's hat," I answered firmly.

"Do you know of what you are accused?"

"Madame, I accuse nobody, not even myself."

The interview could not be carried on any longer on these lines, and the little fit of pride which had seized me when I found myself become a man of importance soon passed.

"M. Dubois," she said, in a passion, "you are an adept at the Old Woman's lessons; but understand that I will no more put up with her impertinences than with those of her lackeys. I have been told that they are plotting the marriage of my daughter with the Duc du Maine."

"Madame, I suppose your consent will be asked as a preliminary."

"Is that another fresh insult? Marry my daughter to the son of a strumpet! I would liefer die."

"I should be wrong, Madame, to express an opinion in your presence; but I vow such an alliance has never been more impossible than at this moment. They say that it is Mademoiselle de Charolais who is to wed the Duc du Maine."

"Let him marry the devil in person, if it seems good to him; but my daughter—never. Listen, Abbé, if I were to hear you betrayed me for the Old Woman, I would send you to the Isles Sainte-Marguerite, without any more ceremony."

"In any case, I wash my hands of whatever happens."

Monsieur and all his household had come to Versailles overnight; I went in the morning to the Duc de Chartres, whom I found gloomier than ever; he told me that he was resigned, although they might have waited to marry him until he desired to be. I encouraged him with a thousand reasons which moved him little. They came to tell him that the King commanded his presence; he rose slowly to go, and I followed him to the high gallery, talking, without exciting much attention from him. He met the young Saint-Simon, who suggested a game of *mail*.

"Monsieur," replied the Duc de Chartres, "I shall soon be sending my children to play with you." And he resumed his way. "M. Dubois," said the governor of M. de Saint-Simon to me, "do not forget me, if there is any place to bestow." I understood that the marriage was already known; I assumed an air of dignity, and went to await the result of the conference at the door of the King's closet.

These are details which the Duc de Chartres gave me. On arriving, he found Monsieur speaking in a low voice with the King, who came to meet him, and embraced him paternally.

"Monsieur," said he, "you are of an age to take a wife who will bear you descendants; the war which troubles Europe prevents

me from choosing her for you in foreign courts; but I wish to testify all my affection by offering you my daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois, whose two sisters have wedded Princes of the Blood; however, I do not pretend to coerce you, and you are at perfect liberty to accept or refuse."

These words were pronounced with an air of authority which admitted no withdrawal, and the Duc de Chartres answered, stammering, that His Majesty had only to command to be obeyed, that he gratefully accepted this illustrious alliance, but that his consent depended on that of Monsieur and Madame.

"That is my concern," replied the King; "only consent, and your father will set you the example."

"Surely," said Monsieur; "I thank His Majesty for the honour he does us."

"Then," said the King, "we only need the reply of Madame."

He sent for her; she had not been the last, doubtless, to learn what was passing, for she arrived immediately.

"Madame," said the King, conducting her by the hand to a seat, "I rely on you not to oppose an arrangement which Monsieur desires equally with the Duc de Chartres."

"It is a question of my son's marriage with a daughter of Mademoiselle de La Vallière," interrupted Madame.

"The matter is concluded," resumed the King severely, "and I should be displeased with you were you to prove less amenable than Monsieur and M. de Chartres."

"Since they wish it, I have nothing to say," she said, making a reverence.

She went out, and her son followed her as far as the gallery, where she perceived me.

"Abbé," she said, "I forbid you to appear in my presence"; "and you," she added, addressing her son, "stay with your precious adviser."

She went and shut herself up in her apartment, where Monsieur joined her. They quarrelled lengthily, and Madame said, apostrophising her family portraits:

"It is very apparent, Monsieur, that you have not a drop of blood Palatine in your veins. How else would you dare now to look these noble ancestors in the face?"

On the following day the dowry was declared, and the preparations for the marriage commanded.

Madame de Maintenon sent for me at an early hour, and said to me, with a joyous air :

"Well, well, Abbé, you have done marvels, and I see now that you are an able man."

"Madame," I replied, "good leaders make good soldiers."

"The only reproach I have to make you concerns religion, which is not where you chiefly shine."

"I am more ashamed than you think, and I will correct myself sooner or later."

"It is said that money makes men virtuous ; this purse is only intended to incite you to become so. His Majesty will not forget you when the time and place comes ; but he commands you to absent yourself during the marriage festivities. The German woman looks upon you as the author of everything ; she is so revengeful that she might do you an ill turn. By the time of your return she will be appeased."

I protested my obedience, and went to take leave of the Prince, who said to me as I left him :

"I shall expect you, Abbé, a fortnight after the wedding, because my honeymoon will be of short duration ; I do not mean to plume myself on my conjugal fidelity."

"In that case," I replied, "my services are indispensable to you."

I went to recruit at my Abbey of Airvault, where I lived like a canon, swearing my fill, exploiting the damsels of the neighbourhood, and living on new-laid eggs. During this period the wedding was celebrated, and a few days after the marriage of the Duc de Chartres, that of the Duc du Maine with Mademoiselle de Charolais was concluded. Madame de Maintenon was satisfied with having *bastardised* the Duc de Chartres, and during the rejoicings she often repeated :

"The vexation I have caused Madame has made me ten years younger !"

CHAPTER XV

DUBOIS RETURNS TO THE PALAIS-ROYAL—THE DUC DE CHARTRES AS A HUSBAND—THE GRATITUDE OF THE GREAT—STATE OF DUBOIS' FORTUNE IN 1692—THE SIEGE OF NAMUR—VAUBAN—THE GRAND-PRIOR OF FRANCE—M. DE ROSEN—BATTLE OF STEINKERQUE—DUBOIS' PROWESS—RETURN TO VERSAILLES

I LET some days pass after the marriage of the Duc de Chartres ; then, judging the wounds to Madame's pride to be partly healed, I returned to Paris, to the Palais-Royal, fearing lest, by keeping myself too long out of sight, my pupil might shake off the yoke of my influence. I found the Prince in the same disposition towards me, as I had known him to bear ; marriage had had no more influence over his friendship to me than over his volatile amours.

"Well, well, Dubois," he said, on seeing me, "I have taken all that is good in my wife ; it is the turn of others now, my dear Abbé."

"What, Monseigneur ! Is the honeymoon over already ?"

"I do not know what you understand by the honeymoon in a political alliance ; but, to tell you the truth, as Prince of the Blood, or simple subject of my father-in-law, I find the nuptial bed a silly thing ; I am weary of it already."

"Oh, not yet, Monseigneur."

"Pray, have you returned more insolent than ever ? But I forgive you, in expiation of the folly I committed in putting on the yoke of matrimony. However, I am as pleased with the Duchesse de Chartres as one can be with a legitimate spouse ; I think we shall get on together ; she is too indolent and not sufficiently *bourgeoise* to torment me with her jealousy. All things considered, woman with woman, she is as good as any other."

"I am relieved, Monseigneur, to see your wedding night has hardly whetted your appetite."

"The devil take your wedding night ; you have not a moment

to yourself, and 'tis then you feel the grievous burden of greatness. But I want to present you to the Duchesse."

I submitted, and the Prince conducted me without ceremony into the apartment of the little Duchesse, who, stretched out nonchalantly on a couch, did not make a sound at our entrance.

"Madame," said the Duc, "this is the Abbé Dubois, my dear tutor, whom I beg you to welcome for my sake."

"An Abbé," said she, without looking at me; "the one who was employed about my marriage? I think I have seen him somewhere or other."

"I have had the honour of offering my services to your Highness, when you were still Mademoiselle de Blois."

"Very good; but my husband no longer needs a tutor, I suppose."

"Madame, the Abbé Dubois is not only a tutor, he is a useful man in more than one relation. Moreover, the King has desired that the Marquis d'Arcy should still remain my honorary governor, and M. Dubois will also retain his place."

"I am quite willing. Do you not find the weather very unpleasant? It is my day for the vapours."

The Prince understood this frank request to retire, and we saluted the Duchesse, who remained in the same state of immobility.

"Dubois," said the Duc de Chartres, as we went out, "I ask you to say what use one can make of such a sluggish piece?"

"What does it matter to you," I rejoined, "provided that she leaves you alone."

I was curious to know in what manner the King, who was so large in his recompenses, would acknowledge my services. I went to pay my respects to Madame de Maintenon, who received me from the pinnacle of her piety. She told me drily that she would let me know when I could be of service to her; and thereupon dismissed me, counselling me to reform my conduct and my religion, of which she had heard no praiseworthy accounts.

"Madame," I answered, impudently enough, "I am afraid of one sin only—scandal!"

I was inclined to suspect that the "old woman" had damaged me with the King. However, I risked the adventure; I went and put myself in ambush when they were issuing from the private table, and I arranged it in such fashion that the King noticed me at once. He accosted me with gracious dignity:

"Ah, it is you, M. Dubois," he said; "I am charmed to see you again. Tell me what we can do for you."

"Sire," I answered, without weighing my words, "your Majesty can make me a Cardinal; but the more powerful he be the less he can do," I added, seeing that my first sentence had made him knit his brow.

The King looked at me with more contempt than anger, and, without giving me a word, entered his closet, shrugging his shoulders.

"I did not expect such impudence," he said; "he would have done as well to ask me to make him King!"

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said the Père La Chaise to me, with a severe air, "if you are mad, go to the hospital; if you are not, you are taking the road to the Bastille."

The King did not reward me until the following year, by giving me the Abbey of Saint-Just, left vacant through the death of the Archbishop of Lyon.

This is the state of my fortune in 1692. Before entering the Palais-Royal, I had amassed a thousand louis by my savings; these I doubled, by lending them out at reasonable interest. In the lifetime of M. de Saint-Laurent I had only a thousand livres, afterwards fifteen hundred livres, as salary. When I became tutor I increased this to four thousand five hundred livres, not including presents. Two or three historical and geographical dissertations which the Duc de Chartres gave at Saint-Cloud, in presence of the Court, were worth sundry gratuities to me. The Prince, in the provisionment of his amours, permitted me, under the name of *Monseigneur Total*, to gain considerable sums which I did not spend. The Abbé Faure, my former master, having died, I solicited the rectorship of Saint-Michel, to prevent it falling into bad hands. It was granted me; but as the *résidence* would have compelled me to reside there, M. de Ségnelay, whom La Fontaine influenced in my favour, gave me a dispensation by writ of council, in consideration of my position with the Duc de Chartres. My salary was increased by fifteen hundred livres when I followed the Prince to the Siege of Mons. The protection of Monsieur was the cause of my being nominated to a canonry of Saint-Honoré, which carried with it the qualification of master of arts. Finally, the King, giving way to the importunate prayers of the Duc de Chartres, had abandoned me the Abbey of

Airvault, which had a noble revenue. This fine commencement presaged a fine end. Benefices—I will take as many of them as are to be had; they are the baubles which set off a man of wit.

The Duc de Chartres accompanied the King to the Siege of Namur, and I accompanied the Duc de Chartres. At Namur, I exposed myself with the most deliberate air, and more than once I followed the Duc de Chartres to the trenches, in the midst of a rain of bullets; in fact, I did all that I could to be killed or wounded. The King, it is true, was no more prudent; his hat was pierced by a musket ball.

"It seems," said he, laughing, "that the besieged have a grudge against my hat."

On another occasion I noticed a Dutch soldier who was aiming at the King:

"To the left, Sire," I cried.

Instead of retreating, all those who were near threw themselves in front of the King, who said calmly:

"It is only a bullet."

This bullet would have killed Monsieur outright, if it had not struck a bastion, which deadened it; it merely grazed the right arm of the Comte de Toulouse, and bruised him severely. The Duc de Chartres picked up the bullet, and loading a musket, said:

"Sire, these poor people have need of their ammunition; permit me to return them what they send."

He fired, and so skilfully, that the soldier, who, seeing the commotion in our group, imagined he had wounded the King, fell dead on the rampart.

"You are a skilled marksman," said Monseigneur to him.

Following my plan of conduct, which consisted in making powerful friends wherever they presented themselves, I attached myself to Vauban, who was as pleased with my conversation as I was with his. Vauban's heart and character belied his face; his eyes had an expression of brutality, almost of ferocity, which would have excited fear in any who did not know his mildness and humanity; for the rest, he justified the Duchesse du Maine's remark, when he was made a Maréchal of France, "He is a peasant hero." His prodigious worth detracted in nought from his modesty; his candour resembled shyness; he was too kind a man, and one would hardly believe the importance he set on the lives of those rascals who bear the musket, and let

themselves be killed for the highest price they can obtain. I have seen him involve the King in an expenditure of a thousand crowns, just to save a hundred soldiers; his urbanity never degenerated into flattery, and his frankness was so great that it led him to tell hard and dangerous truths, for which the King did not hold him in less esteem. He was of an antique virtue; the soldiers became his children, and all that he possessed belonged to them. It is strange that, in spite of the difference of our characters, we should have succeeded in contracting a friendship, so much so, that we would pass hours together conversing, within range of the cannon. With me, spiritual qualities, which seem to me almost useless, are replaced by intellectual ones. One day he conducted me to a lunette which had not yet been attacked.

"'Tis here," said he, "that we will take the place, and that within six days."

This prediction was realised. The Duc de Chartres, who, with his mania to know, or at least to learn everything, had not neglected the art of designing, was particularly anxious to have the advice of Vauban, who admired his quick understanding. They would spend evenings tracing plans and geometrical figures.

"Monseigneur," said Vauban one day, with the ardour of his ideas, "trace me a line of circumvallation in space and I will take the heavens."

"It will certainly not be by famine or scaling-ladders," said the Duc de Chartres.

At the Camp of Namur, I met once more with my first Meccenas, the Duc de Vendôme, who had never seen me since, but casually.

"What, Abbé," said he, "you are playing at war?"

"Certainly, Monseigneur, can not an abbé do everything, even get children?"

"I can answer to you for that," replied the Grand-Prior of Vendôme, whom I had not hitherto encountered, as he lived far from Court, engrossed in the pleasures of the Temple. I know not whether it was that my face, lean, yellow, and fatigued, did not promise a boon companion worthy of his company; but he never invited me to the suppers he gave of nights, where he coupled wine with women of France. This brother of the Duc de

Vendôme had a mock clerical air about his person, if not in his conversation; he dubbed himself the supreme minister of Cythera, and the songs he composed were as good as those of Chaulieu, which are no good at all. He was a Court libertine, whose every vice was redeemed by a hundred fine qualities. He was courageous to the point of rashness, but none the less it has happened to him to leave the army on the eve of a battle in order to visit one of his mistresses. At first, he chose these from the best families, that he might not condescend, even in his amours. But his passion for Madame de Ludres, Canoness of Poussay, whom he shared with the King, disgusted him with these romantic attachments, which had been better applied to Astrea and Clelia. A sad accident, which he did not refute, finally limited his pleasures to the enjoyment of good cheer, wit, and the indolence which is his dominant quality. He was so fond of relating this adventure to everybody, that Palaprat, one of his boon companions, said:

"Monseigneur, you seem to want one of these ladies to ask you to prove your case."

The King, whose devotions were disturbed by these mundane fooleries, shut his mouth thus:

"Monsieur, who has not heard of Abelard?"

The text of the story, not the most authentic, but the most decent, is as follows:—

The Grand-Prior, when he was still only Chevalier de Vendôme, outraged the sensibility of a great lady who had treated him better than he deserved. I leave you to guess, if you can, who this great lady was, and what was the outrage he did her. We know that women are no more forgiving than the Church, and they will have their revenge at any price. One evening, when there was a reception at Versailles, a bat entered through the casement, and flitted round amongst the lustres and candles; the bird of night caused great alarm in the *salon*, and the ladies pushed towards the doors in flight. This tumult frightened the bat, which circled round more swiftly than ever, upset a few torches, and damaged a lady's head-dress. This lady was the ex-mistress of the Chevalier de Vendôme.

"Monsieur," she said, "lend me your sword, and let me bring this horrid beast to justice."

The Chevalier, dreaming of no treachery, drew the blade from

its sheath, and committed it to her fair hands. The bat had settled on a corner of the mirror at the end of the *salon*. The lady begs the Chevalier to second her in her enterprise; she mounts upon an arm-chair, supported by Monsieur de Vendôme; but at the moment when he is kissing her hand, less for love than for gallantry, she gives him a sword-thrust which reaches the part she aims at, with no intention of hurting him mortally.

"Ah, Madame," says he, still smiling, "you are cruelly severe to your friends."

And he falls back in a pool of his own blood.

The lady, giving no signs of consternation, cries out that the Chevalier de Vendôme has wounded himself; the victim of love is transported to his own hotel, and two days later the doctors declare that henceforth the patient will be virtuous willy-nilly. The beauty of the story is that the Grand-Prior always took the blame of his disastrous wound upon himself, and disdained to revenge himself for this feminine vengeance. He made the best of things, and replaced what he had lost as far as that was possible.

"If I were married," said he, "my wife would not have the effrontery to make me a father; at least, I should recognise my workmanship; the King of France could not say as much."

I had noticed, and had been told, that Racine, in order to acquit himself of his task as historian, left the camp when an assault took place, and took up a post of observation on a neighbouring height, outside the range of the artillery. There he directed his spy-glass upon Namur, and by this means wrote the history of the siege from the point of view of an onlooker. Under the pretence of trying his spy-glass, I filled it with grains of sand and dust, without Racine's knowledge. I had made a wager with Cavois that Racine could see nothing through his spy-glass, and that the time he wasted with it was no doubt employed in the composition of a tragedy. Cavois and I went and surprised the poet, who was reading a book, which he concealed on our approach; the spy-glass, directed at random, proved to me that he had not suspected my trick.

"Well," said Cavois, "are you not watching the attack that is just being made?"

"Certainly," said Racine; "but I am taking a breath." And he put his eye to the glass.

"You cannot see," said I.

"Excellently," he answered; "there is the company of the musketeers which is advancing; I can even make out the King, surrounded by his generals."

Cavois burst into a fit of laughter which disconcerted him, and the noise of the gravel made him suspect a jest; he soon had in his hand the fine things he had seen through the glass.

"I vow to you, gentlemen," he said good-humouredly, "that I thought I saw all I mentioned to you."

"And now, what do you see?" I interrupted.

"That the imagination is far less deceptive than the Abbé Dubois."

None the less, he put up his observing-glass again, in such wise that he could at least make out the place where they were fighting. Ashamed of his own prudence, which prevented him from seeing with his own eyes, he gave money to the soldiers, who told him a thousand old wives' tales; all these he packed into his history. I heard him one day question a Swiss who spoke broken French:

"You have come back from the advanced posts," said he; "tell me something new, and this piece of money is your own."

"*Tertais!*" replied the man, "I don't know, me, what I saw; so please you? My comrade had his head cut off by a bullet. . . ."

"Good; and afterwards?"

"*Kurt,*" said I, "you must come back to camp without your head. Is it all?"

"Thank you, my brave fellow." And behold Racine committing this buffoonery to writing for fear he should forget it.

The siege was being pressed with vigour, and whilst the Prince of Orange, at the head of the confederate army, was endeavouring to relieve Namur, the armies of the Maréchal de Luxembourg and the Marquis de Boufflers were harassing him on all sides. The besieged defended themselves with desperation, and each fresh fortification we seized from them seemed but to augment their resistance. The new Fort, well provided with men and ammunition, sustained several attacks, in which we lost many of our company; in the end, it was taken by assault in the night; Vauban had directed the attacks. On the morrow, when the garrison left to be escorted to Ghent, the Duc de Chartres, Vauban, a few gentlemen of the Court, and myself entered the fort to examine it more

nearly. We descended into a cellar, whither we were attracted by the sound of sobs. There we saw a hollow excavation, and a little old man in the deepest distress.

"Who are you?" asked the Duc de Chartres, "and what are you doing there?"

"I am Cohorn," he answered; "it was I who constructed this fort; I thought it impregnable, and I do not want to survive my dishonour."

"Monsieur," said Vauban, "the fortune of war cannot be foretold, and a defeat may be as fine as a victory."

"Ah, Monsieur, if I had been attacked in the ordinary manner, I should have defended myself for yet another fortnight."

"What you tell me," replied Vauban, "causes me inexpressible joy; it is true, I have not style, and merely trust to my eye."

"You are M. Vauban," cried Cohorn, leaping from his trench; "let me embrace my master."

Vauban opened his arms to him with an emotion which was shared by the onlookers.

"I hope that we may meet elsewhere," said the Dutch engineer.

He rejoined his troops, without caring to be bandaged, although his head was wounded by a fragment of a shell. The capitulation of Namur followed that of the New Fort. Three days afterwards, the King started for Versailles.

Amongst the persons whose memory will always be agreeable to me, I will not forget M. Rosen, who valued me so high, that he asked me to the dainty table which he kept in full camp, just as in the town. It was on this that all his revenue was squandered, and it was not sufficient. The King, who loved him, provided for his table-money. Rosen, as thin as he was tall, seemed like to break when he was walking; a bullet had broken his leg, and he retained a limping gait, which did not prevent him from making a good officer. I have never understood why, having so much wit, he should have made it a game to clip his words at every sentence. The King was amused at his indifference to correct speaking. Rosen, in spite of his coarse exterior, possessed a rare tact. He told me that if he had tried to model his speech on that of the courtiers he would have finished by being unable to understand himself. When he fought, moreover, it was apparent that he had been a soldier

before being a commander. The combat of Steinkerque brought the campaign to a glorious termination. It was truly a fine action; and the Duc de Chartres exposed himself so prominently to the hostile ranks that I did not deem it my duty to follow him at my own risk. I looked on myself as but barely half a soldier—a chaplain wearing a sword!

M. d'Arcy tried to use his authority as governor to moderate the Prince's ardour.

"*Corbleu!*" cried the latter, "I warn you that the only governor I recognise here is my sword."

"And if you are slain, Monseigneur, what shall I say to Monsieur?"

"Whatever you like," said the Prince.

And he galloped off into the thick of the *mêlée*. A huge devil of an Englishman threw himself upon him, pistol in hand. The bullet grazed the Duc de Chartres' arm, and he cried:

"Gentlemen, I am not wounded! Follow me!"

At the same moment, the Englishman, who was making again for the Duc de Chartres, fell dead.

"Monseigneur," said M. d'Arcy coldly, "if I had been at your side, you would not have been wounded."

"I am lucky to have escaped with so little," said the Duc de Chartres.

The courage of this Prince of eighteen surprised and excited the troops, who returned to the charge with renewed ardour. This movement renewed the battle; and whilst M. de Luxembourg, who had the gout, performed prodigies of valour and genius, the Prince de Conti, M. le Duc, the Duc de Vendôme, and the Grand-Prior at the head of the King's household, decided the victory.

"Gentlemen," said M. de Luxembourg to them after the action, "the Prince of Orange has had the honour of being beaten by the princes and nobility of France."

I did not remain, during the battle, hidden like Sosia in a tent, eating and drinking; I even incurred some peril. I was walking in the rear of the army, mighty concerned about the fortune of the day and the Duc de Chartres. A German soldier, who was fleeing, saw me, and rushed at me with an oath. I drew my sword and put myself in a position of defence; but the rogue had a sabre and a pistol, and I judged it prudent to make a com-

promise. I made him a friendly gesture, and held out my sword to him by the hilt; he advanced in the utmost good faith, and I sheathed it in his belly so rapidly, that he had not time to notice my politeness. After this fine feat of arms, I went and took refuge with our rear-guard. I gave such a magnificent account of my prowess to the Duc de Chartres that he embraced me, and called me the hero among abbés, to which I made answer that I was only the abbé of a hero. His wound was healed in a very few days. It is to him that the fashion of *Steinkerques* is due, a kind of cravat worn by women, because, in the hurry of the combat, the Duc de Chartres had tied his in a very negligent manner. This victory gave its name to many other trinkets, and the return of the princes was a veritable triumph, which excited the jealousy of the King. All along the road women ran out with flowers, magistrates with compliments, children with songs. One day when I was separated from the Prince, I know not for what reason, I owed a provincial conquest to the honour of having played my part at Steinkerque.

Our arrival at Versailles had the air of a triumph, and the Duc de Chartres, especially, was overwhelmed with congratulations. The King alone did not share the enthusiasm, and he met everybody with reproaches.

"Monsieur d'Arcy," said he, "why did you not have a care of your pupil's life?"

"Sire," replied the Marquis, "His Royal Highness left the duty of watching over his person to his sword, and a slight wound is rewarded by victory."

"And you, Monsieur l'Abbé," added the King, "I am told you conducted yourself like a soldier."

"Sire," I replied boldly, "the victory would have been finer if you had presided over it."

The King gave a poor reception to the Prince de Conti and M. le Duc. The Grand-Prior of France, who, in his quality of grandson to Henri IV, spoke with great freedom, said to Louis XIV:

"Sire, it was no painted battle!"

The Duc de Chartres had no time to become bored before the next campaign; his face, his rank, and the renown of his first feats of arms increased the number of his conquests amongst the great ladies, who, by dint of coquetry and excessive demands for

constancy, drove him back more than ever on my system of vulgar and transient amours. Madame la Duchesse de Chartres, as thoroughly indifferent to her husband as to everything else, seconded my notions as fully as if she had an understanding with me.

At the commencement of spring, the same princes, the same troops, the same general, and the same victory. In spite of the King's ill-humour, I thought it as well not to desert the fortunes of the Duc de Chartres. The Prince of Orange was surprised by our forced march on the village of Nerwinde, and no more terrible battle has ever been known out of the romances. The Prince's impetuosity did not allow me to take my place by his side. However, I had a caprice, as it were, to make myself illustrious; it was not arms I lacked. In the course of the action I heard cries of "the Prince of Orange!" and I saw a cavalier, who, after having routed two squadrons, rushed forward, followed at a distance by his company. I was on horseback, and, charging on him, I fired my pistol at random. I only struck the horse, which fell with the Prince, and there was a cry, "the Prince of Orange is taken!" But, finding myself alone against a host of the enemy which arrived at that moment, I decided to retreat, and the Duc de Chartres, who had seen me in the distance, said to me angrily:

"Why did you not kill him?"

"They would have killed me too."

"What does it matter? The war would have been over."

The Prince then rushed the trenches which the Prince of Orange had thrown up during the night. The Prince de Conti and M. le Duc were fighting like common soldiers. Twice was the Duc de Chartres surrounded, and within an ace of being taken prisoner; but in warfare rashness is almost as likely to preserve as to expose.

"Monseigneur," said I, when the fight was over, "who would believe that the eagle has been reared by a gosling."

"Your Royal Highness is too ready to expose yourself," said the Marquis d'Arcy, who did not apply my simile to himself.

"Monsieur d'Arcy," said the Prince, "the Prince of Orange, who is King of England, risks more than I do, who am as yet only the Duc de Chartres."

Louis XIV, whom old age, bigotry, and, above all, the

Maintenon, kept in idleness at Versailles, saw nothing in the day of Nerwinde but the glory of the princes, which wounded him. He was angered that there were any laurels in his kingdom for anyone but himself. Thus the conquerors of Nerwinde were disheartened by reproaches or indifference. When the Prince de Conti said to the King, pointing out M. de Luxembourg:

"Sire, that is the decorator of Notre-Dame."

Louis XIV replied:

"I advise you to inscribe your name on the flags taken at Steinkerque and at Nerwinde."

He said, moreover, to the Duc de Chartres, with a sardonic smile:

"Monsieur, as I am more interested in your life than in the death of two or three poor devils, I am going to confine you for several years in my Court, in order to teach you to exchange your courage for a little prudence."

In fact, neither the Prince de Conti, M. le Duc, nor the Duc de Chartres obtained permission to serve in the ensuing campaigns. The Duc de Chartres devoted these years of inaction to his pleasures; these were softer, though less dangerous combats.

CHAPTER XVI

MORTALITY—DEATH OF LA FONTAINE—OF THE PRINCESS OF ORANGE AND OF M. DE HARLAY, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS—MADAME DE LESDIGUIÈRES—ILLNESS OF DUBOIS—DOCTOR CARRETTE AND HIS ELIXIR — THE QUARREL — THOMAS CORNEILLE—MIGNARD'S PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE MAINTENON —SAINTE-FRANÇOISE—MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ—MADAME DE COULANGES—GENTLEMAN OR MAJOR-DOMO—THE HANDS—DUBOIS' CREDIT SUFFERS

THE worthy La Fontaine only survived Madame de la Sablière, whom he loved as much as his cat and dog, two years. He expired after a long illness, during which the Père Pujet had succeeded in making the author of the *Tales*, by frightening him with the devil, a penitent in a hair-shirt. In the latter days of his life he almost entirely gave up seeing his friends, for fear of being reminded by them of the sins of his youth. I paid him a visit a few days before his death; he was in bed, employed in pasting pictures of saints on all the pages of his *Tales*.

"You see," said he, "I am doing an act of contrition."

He had an old nurse by his side, who, with spectacles on nose, was reading her breviary; she raised her head when La Fontaine cried, with a groan:

"I am a great sinner!"

"Let it alone, Monsieur," she said; "the good God won't have the courage to damn you."

Poor La Fontaine had moments when he wandered. He suddenly asked me my name, and when I had told him, he apostrophised me in these words:

"Do you know the litanies for the dying?"

"No," said I.

"In that case, take yourself off."

Thereupon he turned his back on me abruptly, and obstinately refused to speak further to me, do what I might to persuade him. I rose to leave him, when he called me back, begging me

CHAPTER XVI

155

to repeat to him the fable of *The Dead Man and the Curate*; and, as I did not know it by heart, he commenced to recite it, laughing heartily.

"Is it not a singular story?" said he. "'Tis the first time a curate's stomach was ever turned by the dead."

"Instead of these gloomy ideas," said I, "you should have brighter thoughts."

"My dear Dubois," he replied, with tears in his eyes, "the excellent Molière died first; after me there will be still Boileau and Racine left."

I could not restrain my emotion, and I left him that I might not let it appear. Five days later he was buried in the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, in the same spot where Molière had been buried twenty years before.

The Princess of Orange, daughter of James II, also died, being still young and lovely. This news reached Versailles so unexpectedly, that it was thought to be as false as that which was brought to Madame at the same time, announcing that the Palatinate was flooded, and twenty thousand Germans drowned. Wagers, rendered fashionable by the King of England, were started on the subject of this death, which was still doubtful. When it was no longer possible to doubt it, the question of mourning was broached, and James II, more a king than a father under the circumstances, settled it in one word by forbidding it to be worn.

"She is my daughter no longer," he said, hiding his grief; "she is the wife of a rebel."

M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, succumbed to an attack of apoplexy. He was the flower of gallants. He would sometimes leave his carriage and seek adventures in the streets of Paris. In spite of this licentious conduct, he long preserved the esteem and friendship of the King, to whose vices he pandered. When Madame de Maintenon was secretly intriguing for the publication of her marriage, he threw himself into the party of Louvois, and was involved in his disgrace. His ambition even exceeded his immorality; he was, moreover, a prelate of great wit. One day a preacher entered the pulpit, in presence of the King, and divided his sermon under four heads; but suddenly an urgent necessity, on which he had not counted, forced him to leave his post, and ask his audience's indulgence.

The Archbishop of Paris profited by his absence to begin a sermon on the four points which the other had laid down. The latter returned, and was amazed to find his task almost accomplished. It was not the only occasion on which M. de Harlay displayed his eloquence, which always won him the King's heart.

"That man," said Louis XIV, "is a demon in his private life; but he talks of Paradise like an angel."

The scandalous life he led, attracted the notice of the Holy See, which very nearly inhibited him. He was by no means particular about saying his mass, and he finished by ceasing to distinguish Sunday from the other days of the week. His temperament had imperious necessities, and many a fair penitent paid the pastoral tithe to him in kind. Besides these amours by the batch, he had two regular mistresses, who shared the episcopal throne with him, Madame de Bretonvilliers and Madame de Lesdiguières. This last, who devoured the Church's possessions without any scruples, lived almost maritally with him until his death. She never missed a procession, and flaunted in them with the airs of an archbishop in petticoats. It was in her arms that M. de Harlay was struck with apoplexy, after a hardly canonical debauch. Madame de Lesdiguières, for their common honour, did not call for help until she had saved Monseigneur's dignity by removing all the traces of their orgy. A certain Père Gaillard was charged with the funeral oration, in which he acquitted himself gallantly. He spoke of everything in this funeral discourse except of the dead prelate. The President de Harlay, his brother, by nature a scoffer, was none too much afflicted at his loss; his austerity was offended by the Archbishop's manner of life. I do not, however, believe he was guilty of the following verse, which was attributed to him:—

Harlay n'est plus : ce prince de l'Eglise
Dout l'âme fut à Vénus si soumise !

Paix !

Le Pape le canonise !
Lesdiguières en fait les frais.¹

¹ To render the Version freely :

"Harlay's no more : that prelate grave !

Whose soul was ever Venus' slave :

Peace may he have !

The Pope proclaims his saintly soul,

Lesdiguières will pay the toll." [Translator's Note.]

What with all this sickness and death, I did not perceive that my own health had rudely suffered; for, after all, one is not made of iron. My eternal ideas of ambition had heated my blood no less than had my amorous exploits. I had been led in my search of pleasures into doubtful haunts, and I often took there what I had far better have left alone. Finally, more even than the fatigue of overwork, my irascible humour had worn out the poor machine, and I began to see there was need to doctor myself seriously, under penalty of a general breakdown of my whole system. I was so thin that I looked like a skeleton, and it is a miracle that I was able to resist so long with such a frail appearance. A rigorous *régime* brought me back to life, and this rule, which I have never since infringed, has always made up for the excesses of my temperament.

It was the moment to lay hold of a physician, and it was a physician who laid hold of me. I say physician, but I ask the faculty's pardon for the phrase. It was an Italian quack named Carro-Carri, but he had made his name French by turning it into Carrette, in order to remove any prejudice that his nationality might have excited against him.

"Never did poisoner better know his trade."

He was sent to me, I know not by whom, and his golden tongue unloosed my purse-strings. He promised me enormous profits if I consented to go into partnership with him. He exacted payment, I may say, in the manner of those fellows who sell the secret of the philosopher's stone. I plead guilty for the vogue into which I brought him with the highest ranks of society; in fact, he gained large sums of money, which he honourably divided with me. His whole pharmacopia consisted of a certain elixir, on which he set an exorbitant price; the bottle cost ten crowns, I believe; and the Jew also sold cures in advance, prepared to remain everybody's debtor. However, fashion had established him in the favour of the ladies, and Carrette was indispensable to the slightest indisposition. His doctorial pride became so puffed up at a success which he owed to me, that he ennobled himself in despite of everyone; people laughed, but none the less went on consulting him.

Ingratitude soon induced him to break our association, and this viper, whom I had cherished in my breast, confessed to me

with vast regrets that he had decided to carry on his elixir and assassinations by himself. This was not all; he even tried to enrich himself at my expense. He respectfully presented me with a long apothecary's bill amounting to a total of 200 crowns.

"What is that?" I asked ingenuously.

"A little debt that I must beg you to discharge."

"It is you, you robber, who owe me a terrible debt of gratitude."

"Monsieur l'Abbé, I shall certainly honour it, as you will mine."

"But what are all these items?"

"The number of my visits, my dear master."

"What visits are you talking of, rascal?"

"They are marked down exactly since the first one, and I have not put them at their full value out of respect to you."

"What, you thief, you would make me pay for the nuisance of seeing your foolish face?"

"Am I not a physician, at your service, Monseigneur? It is no fault of mine if you are always in good health."

"No doubt, assassin, it is not the fault of your elixir if I am; the one glass I took very nearly served me as it has so many others."

"*Chè volete*, my good gentleman; if doctors always cured their patients, patients would cease to exist. Pay me, if you please."

"Listen, rogue; if you value your visits at three livres, for my part, I estimate each audience I have given you at a hundred livres."

My anger was about to flame out; he deemed it prudent to withdraw, and if he had not taken this course, I think I should have avenged all his patients at one stroke.

After this ridiculous scene I decried him as much as I had vaunted him at first, and his medical blunders did him as much harm as I could have done. He saw himself abandoned by all his clients, and some even made a mockery of his insolent vanity, like M. de Barbezioux, who sent for him to treat one of his watchdogs. I, on my side, spared no pains to destroy my own work, and abused him so warmly that in less than no time all his reputation vanished in smoke. One of the first causes of his success was the mention the *Mercur Galant* made every month of his elixir; to put an end to these bought praises, I went myself to Visé, the author of this journal.

He was ill, and absent from Paris; I met, in his place, his colleague, Thomas Corneille, who received me with officious politeness, and promised to respect the motive of my call. M. Corneille had one of those good-humoured faces which are rarely deceptive. Although he was advanced in years, he seemed of robust health, and his Norman highly-coloured physiognomy rather bespoke the peasant than a distinguished man of letters. At this first interview I remarked his modesty, so lavish in others' praise, and although he made no parade of devotion, it was revealed in his least action. He seemed to me of an extreme sensibility, and he could not speak of his brother without the moisture coming to his eyes. He was a universal savant, and he spoke as freely of literature and the drama as of politics. When I informed him who I was, he redoubled his attentions, and I could not refrain from doing honour to his conversation.

"The *Mercur Galant*," said I, "must bring you a fine revenue?"

"No, Monsieur," he said; "M. de Visé and I find it difficult to support ourselves, especially since the last few years; I am alone charged with the direction of it, nevertheless I have the smallest share of the profits."

"The Gazette and the rhymed journal of Lorret cannot do you much harm, and, unless I have a bad memory, I have seen times when everybody wished to have his place in the *Mercur Galant*."

"In the time of Larrisoles and the piece of M. Boursault; but since the *Comédie sans Titre* was played, ten years ago, the taste of the day has greatly changed."

"No doubt you have a pension from the King?"

"None, Monsieur; since the death of Pierre, I have lived in obscurity, and comedians often refuse to play my pieces; yet I have my family and that of my late brother to support."

"Your counters as an academician can not be of much assistance to you?"

"My labour suffices for everything; for fifty years I have had a pen in my hand, and I often write night and day."

"I perceive, in fact, that the Chapelains are the best remunerated of all the wits; men of talent are forgotten."

"Because they forget to ask. In short, I am contented; my supplement to the Dictionary of the Academy, in two volumes in-folio, has just been appreciated beyond its deserts. I am

now finishing my large Dictionary of Geography, which will amount to as much as three folio volumes."

"This means enormous labour! One man's life hardly suffices for it."

"What would you say then of the great Universal Dictionary of M. Bayle, which is being printed in Holland? M. l'Abbé de Renaudot made a great mistake in opposing the publication of that noble work."

"I will speak to the King and to Monsieur, and I have no doubt but that the injustice of which you have been a victim will be repaired."

"I require nothing, so long as I preserve my eyesight. When the windows are closed, it will be a signal for leaving the house."

I paid a visit to a portrait of Madame de Maintenon painted by Mignard; all the Court went there; there is no one sensible enough to withstand the fashion. One was never greeted by anyone at Versailles but with the words: "Have you seen Mignard's *Sainte-Françoise*?"¹ In fact, the painter's flattery had disguised Madame de Maintenon as a saint, at the risk of the storm of jests which this burlesque involved. Mignard had a remarkable talent, but it did not bear analysis. His colours are marvellously varied, but one often does not know whether he desired to paint flesh or wood. This portrait, which attracted such a crowd, surpassed even that of Turenne. It was an angelic face, resembling, however, the model, thanks to the water of youth. The defects occurred chiefly in the composition, and the Roman *Sainte-Françoise*, in an ermine-lined mantle, was supremely grotesque. It was said, referring to this mantle, the distinctive mark of royalty, that Madame de Feuquières, Mignard's daughter, had asked the King if it might figure on the shoulders of Madame de Maintenon?

"Yes," replied the Monarch, "*Sainte-Françoise* fully deserves it."

Madame de Feuquières returned to the attack, no doubt at the Maintenon's instigation, and asked for the Queen's crown for the portrait.

"It is useless," said the King; "saints have no need of crowns."

While visiting the portrait, I found myself in the company of sundry persons whom I had already seen at Versailles. Madame de Sévigné and Madame de Coulanges accompanied the Abbé

¹ *Françoise* was the Christian name of Madame de Maintenon.

Tétu, and I took as much pleasure in observing them as in listening to their conversation.

Madame de Sévigné was no longer young, and did not conceal the fact; what there was of her testified to what she must have been at the time of her great beauty; her sixty-eight years, however, had not yet written the irreparable ravages on her countenance, and, as everyone knows, grace has no age. Her features retained their piquant irregularity, that something indefinable which one finds again in her grand-daughter, Madame de Simiane. Her figure was still erect and easy, and her eyes had never been more vivacious. I admired her mobile eyelids, and the little, square nose which had charmed her cousin Bussy de Rabutin, and, even more, the Comte de Toulouse. He often speaks of her with a religious admiration. The first words which issued from the lips of this lady would have attested her wit, had I been inclined to doubt it.

Madame de Coulanges was neither plain nor pretty; she was reaching an age when one ceases to be either; but none the less in her person, her smile, her lively and decided attitude there was something not unattractive. The numerous lovers of this lady had surrendered to her at first sight. She had considerable wit; it was a family inheritance, and I remember some of her epigrams which were more stinging than all the songs of Coulanges, her husband. She had the mania of vapours just then, and Carrette, who had extracted less money from her than he could have wished, ruined her health for good.

She was nicknamed the *Fly* at Court, the illusion being to her biting raillery. She let her tongue run loose, for fear, said she, of doing like the serpent, which is sometimes reduced to biting itself. Her religion was strictly limited, and once, when being seriously ill, she received extreme unction, she said to the priest: "That will be enough for two." Of all her passions, the most constant and the most turbulent was that for the Abbé Tétu de Belval.

When these three personages arrived, I was standing at some distance from the pictures, in order the better to judge the effect. Madame de Sévigné took me for a custodian, and the darkness of the corner where I had stationed myself contributed to the mistake.

"My good man," said she, "will you please explain the accessories of this picture to us?"

"I beg your pardon, Madame," said I, coming up to them, "I am not what you think me, but, none the less, I will tell you all I know."

"In truth, Monsieur," she replied, with a charming gaiety, "I see what a mistake I have made, and I beg you to excuse me. My short-sightedness has already deceived me grossly enough. Do you remember, Madame," she added, turning to her companion, "my adventure in the Château of Chaulnes? I had one of those travellers' hungers, which make your very bowels cry out, and there was no sign of dinner. I noticed a man at the other side of the room whom I took to be the major-domo: 'My good sir,' I said to him, without ceremony, 'it is one o'clock, serve the dinner, I beg you, and our appetite will reward you with a thousand thanksgivings.' The man looked at me with eyes so astonished that I became so myself before he replied: '*Mon Dieu*, Madame, I should be only too happy to ask you to dine with me. My name is Pécaudière; I am a gentleman, and my house is only two leagues from Landerneau.' I was quite confused at the politeness of this worthy gentleman of Basse-Brétagne, and, in order to punish myself for my clumsiness, I accepted an invitation to the most wearisome of state dinners, from Paris to Landerneau."

"Sdeath, Madame," said the Abbé Tétu, with his wonted amiability, "I believe it *was* clumsiness for a woman of your age."

"My dear Tétu," said Madame de Sévigné, "you ought to take an occasional dose of opium for your coarseness."

They spoke of the picture. I gave my contribution; and, wonderful to relate, the Abbé talked little; in revenge, he scolded bitterly.

"You have such a bad temper," said Madame de Coulanges, "that I despair of ever curing you."

"We will have the Abbé appointed Bishop of the Incurables," said Madame de Sévigné.

The conversation turned to the hands of Madame de Maintenon.

"They were her most beautiful feature," said Madame de Sévigné, "and my daughter, Madame de Grignan, was so much in love with her hands that she wished the like to the Blessed Virgin."

"*Mon Dieu*," cried Madame de Coulanges, "what would she do with them? I desire to make them pure."

Suddenly she perceived my own, which I was displaying without any affectation. If my vanity does not mislead me, she must have whispered to Madame de Sévigné: "Speaking of hands, observe Monsieur's"; and Madame de Sévigné approved the remark with a smile which I also appropriated unceremoniously. From the subject of hands we passed to the Ancients and the Moderns, whom Perrault and Boileau were setting at loggerheads.

"The Ancients were more beautiful," said Madame de Sévigné, "but we are the prettier."

"Madame, your mirror will tell you so," said I.

"That is a compliment," said she, "which reaches me twenty years too late."

We separated without knowing rightly what we thought of one another. We did not see Mignard, who was then painting the portrait of Louis XIV, for the tenth time, to serve as a pendant to that of *Sainte-Françoise*.

"You find me much aged?" asked the King.

"Sire," he answered, "I see a few more victories on your Majesty's brow."

During the three years which followed the Campaign of 1693, I was less often in attendance on the Duc de Chartres; whether because the Duchesse wished to remove me, or that the Prince was tired of my counsels, or, perhaps, that adroit rivals had succeeded in counterbalancing the influence I had acquired over my pupil's mind, I gravitated obscurely during these three interminable years round my master's star, and my credit suffered from this coldness. A distressing idea haunted me; I feared lest I should be brought to a halt half-way to fortune, and see my ambitious dreams brought to nothing. The distractions I sought in the ranks above and below me did not kill the worm of discontent, and it is due to my perseverance that I conquered again and again the affection and confidence of the Prince I had formed in my own image.

CHAPTER XVII

ORIGINS OF MASSILLON — HIS PORTRAIT AND CHARACTER—
 QUIETISM—MADAME GUYON—HER CONFESSOR, PÈRE LACOMBE
 —PURE LOVE—FÉNÉLON—BOSSUET—A SPIRITUAL GATHER-
 ING—DUBOIS AMONG THE ELECT—MADAME GUYON'S ARREST
 —THE END OF QUIETISM—NINON DE LENCLOS—HER POR-
 TRAIT AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY

I HAD been in relations with Massillon when he left the Oratory, and I may mention that nothing has happened to break this friendship, which still exists. Massillon gave the promise, at this time, of all that he has since become, and I, at any rate, divined his talent long before it blazed on the stage of the Court. Bourdaloue had presented him to Madame de Maintenon, when quite young, and she received him inconsequently, save only for the consideration she gave to his clerical quality. Massillon, modest and shy, did not yet foresee that he was to fill a place by the side of Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, and Mascaron; he did not even think of making use of friends and influence, and I myself was the first to entreat him to aim at the pulpit. He attributed my advice to the partiality of friendship, and gave no heed to it. I had heard him give a lecture at the Convent of Sainte-Magloire, and the praise I gave him had so little effect on his simplicity, that he secluded himself in the Monastery of Sept-Fonds, where he would have remained with Père Latour, General of the Oratorians, who wished to make a preacher and Abbé at Court.

Père Latour showed him the attachment of a father; it was probably not without reason. On his return to Paris, Massillon found me as he had left me, disposed to love him as a brother, although I was not the son of Père Latour.

I saw with pleasure that the monastic life he had led had disgusted him with retirement, and I congratulated him on his nascent ambition.

"My friend," said I, "'tis a plant that grows in all soils."

CHAPTER XVII

165

Certainly, if Massillon had not succeeded, it was because he had not wished to.

With Abbés, as with other men, appearance is of more service than desert, which only appeals to practised eyes. Massillon was rather a pretty Abbé than a handsome man, and now, even with his bishop's robes, he has one of those good faces which have no age, so long as they keep their freshness. He had such a fund of health in his vivacious eyes, in his fat, rosy cheeks, and his double chin, that the Versailles ladies, more intelligent than those of less quality, would have been pleased to interest themselves in his advancement. But this innocent Massillon never knew how to profit by his natural advantages, and as he had, and will ever have, a horror of scandal, he only sought his sustenance with ladies of frail virtue. He would have thought it a mortal sin to make a cuckold, and his prudishness resisted all I could say against so narrow a scheme of conscience.

He has often related to me the opportunities he missed owing to his scruples, and I said to him with pity: "You are an Abbé amongst a thousand." That is why he keeps his reputation for virtue intact, as it had been a relic, and I am forced to confess that he is an honest man to be unwilling to live at his neighbour's expense. All that, he would remind me, is but an affair of conduct; for, directly he was free from the functions of his office, he was once more the amiable man, the friend of pleasure. I have often taken him to parties of pleasure, at which he was a faithful devotee, and good cheer frightened him no more than the rest. Only, with a perfect mania, and as a last form of propriety, before sitting down at table, he removed his little collar, saying: "I return to animal life." These peccadilloes never transpired, and Massillon, respected and esteemed, is still the friend of Dubois, who passes for the most vicious and despicable of men.

Since Massillon abandoned the Sept-Fonds for the Court, he moved in the most distinguished society. His charming face, his noble manners, and his eloquence, reinforced by a sweet voice, combined to buy him appreciation. He was not yet illustrious, but he had reached the point of being noticeable; a little Abbé of the middle classes could not hope for better. Fénelon, especially, who had just been appointed Archbishop of Cambrai, showed him some affection, which was strengthened by their common love of Quietism.

This doctrine, which was neither so chimerical nor so ideal as they would have us believe, had been conceived by Madame Guyon, who arose as a new Saint Theresa. She was early left a widow, with fortune, beauty, a temperament, and a confessor. He was a monk of the name of Lacombe, and I leave you to imagine how a monk understands pure love! He excited all the senses of his penitent, either by his discourses or some other means; and behold Madame Guyon, a pious woman after her fashion, trapesing the country, saddled with her monk, preaching, arguing, and catching weak wits in the snares of her spirituality. Youthful brains caught fire, and the new adepts swam amid the delights of this new piety, and all for the greater glory of God.

Madame Guyon had a daughter mighty well trained in ecstasies, who talked without understanding of the entire abandonment of herself, of the silence of the soul, and of pure love. Switzerland, Savoy, and Dauphiny laughed at these mysteries, whose aim was a purely sensual one. This made a noise, and after five years of wandering and adventure, the Archbishop, who was no foe of external cults and impure love, dealt a terrible blow both at the inward cult and at pure love, by confining Madame Guyon and her daughter in the Convent of the Visitation. Cries of persecution were raised, and Quietism gained more strength thereby; there was a rush of folk to experience pure love.

Madame de Maintenon was fain to taste of it; and Fénelon, who, after having read the *Torrents* of Madame Guyon, had conceived a passion for her and her God, pleaded her cause so warmly with the favourite, that he procured her release from captivity. The confessor-monk, who was rotting in the Bastille, was forgotten, and the lucky Fénelon took his place as expounder of pure love. Fénelon, tutor to the Duc de Bourgogne, had one of those tender and poetic imaginations which are drawn to all things supernatural. He loved God as a mistress, and as it were reciprocally. A courtier as much as a priest, noble and well-favoured, there was no ecclesiastical dignity to which he might not aspire. He threw himself unreservedly into the arms of Madame Guyon; and the latter, in the hope of assuring herself of a support in all contingencies, made him her favourite proselyte.

Quietism was organised in Paris. Madame de Maintenon,

whom Fénelon had converted, was installed as patroness of their mystical assemblies, whither other great ladies were introduced in her train. Men were more easily admitted, and Racine, still enamoured of the Champmêlé, embraced the phantoms which were offered to his imagination. Madame Guyon preached; Madame de Maintenon preached; Fénelon preached,—all in the style of the Apocalypse; then prayer was offered; then pure love ran riot.

However, I am still at a loss for the key to the enigma.

Madame Guyon, ambitious, like every leader of a sect, grew in importance daily, beneath the aegis of her beloved Fénelon. She insinuated herself into Saint-Cyr, indoctrinated the young ladies, and gave umbrage to Godet, Bishop of Chartres, and confessor of Madame de Maintenon. He thought they were going to steal his penitent from him, and he contrived his intrigues so secretly, that Madame Guyon and her *dear son*, Fénelon, succumbed to them. However, the favour of the initiated was extreme, and the Duc de Bourgogne, tender and naïve as he had been made by Fénelon, let himself be moved by this pure love, which came near to take me captive also. Madame de Maintenon had steered the ship of Quietism so well, that the King would have fallen in with it, thinking no harm. It was the hatred of Bossuet for Fénelon that overthrew all his work.

Bossuet, for all his genius, lacked soul; he might have been the counterpart of Boileau. Gentle passions seemed to him despicable, and all his strength was steeped in pride and envy. All great men are so. He had, I believe, no reason to detest Fénelon, but the difference existing between their respective characters had alienated them from the outset.

Godet wrote to Madame de Maintenon that the "pure love" of Madame Guyon and Fénelon possessed all the infirmities of carnal love. Madame de Maintenon thought she had the right to be jealous, and complained to Bossuet of Fénelon's treachery, admitting herself to be a strayed sheep with all the ingenuousness in the world. Bossuet thundered like the voice of Jehovah on Mount Sinai, and war was declared against Quietism. Madame Guyon had foolishly placed her confidence in a lady of Saint-Cyr; it seems that the latter's revelations completed the ruin of the spiritualists' cause. Bossuet, skilled in the art of pathos, went and flung himself at the feet of the King, wept, stormed, begged,

and, under pretext of religion, obtained a *lettre-de-cachet* against Madame Guyon, who was warned in time.

Confusion seized the little flock; Fénelon made it his task to allay the storm, and all this time Madame Guyon lay hid in the heart of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, notwithstanding that she had been commanded to leave Paris, under pain of imprisonment. Things were in this position, when the idea came to Massillon to make me a Quietist. In the crisis, recruits for initiation were being sought on all sides, and there was a diligent levy of bucklers for Madame Guyon's defence against her powerful and unknown enemies. The town and the Court interested themselves in a religious quarrel, of which Bossuet and Fénelon were the leaders. The Bishop of Chartres behaved like a true Jesuit in this affair; he even made a pretence of espousing the cause of Madame Guyon, who had no suspicion that treason was so near her.

"Dubois," said Massillon to me, "will you assist to-night at an assembly of the Quietists?"

"Willingly," said I; "I am entirely for pure love, and if Madame Guyon is as I imagine her, we shall understand one another without the need of words."

"You jest; but if you had drunk at the spring-head, as I have done, you would set no bounds to your admiration of their noble spirituality."

"Tis my nature to love spiritual folk and matters. Between ourselves, the substance of Quietism is more mundane than is believed; I see an allegory beneath. We will judge of it this very night; we shall be in excellent company. M. Fénelon will preside."

We repaired at nightfall to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and I discovered that Massillon was an initiate of long-standing. He stopped before a big gate, gave three knocks, and led me into an adjacent street, where we found another small gate which closed behind us. The hooded figure of a man drew near to reconnoitre us; he raised his lantern to a level with our faces. Massillon, in a grave voice, pronounced these words: "The woman shall be pregnant with the spirit that is within, and the serpent shall stand erect before her."

After this Biblical recommendation, the Cerberus allowed us to go upstairs. We arrived in a vast apartment, which was dimly illuminated. From the silence which ruled there, one would not

have believed the assembly to have been so numerous. Men and women of all ages were ranged in a circle round a woman who stood veiled and motionless. At the first glance, I recognised many people of the very highest rank—Madame de Chevreuse and Madame de Beauvilliers, the Duchesse de Mortemart, Madame de Marstein, the Comtesse de Guiche; Messieurs Léchelle, Dupuis, Racine, and others. I leant over to ask in Massillon's ear what one had to do.

"Listen, and exalt your soul," he replied. The comedy began. Madame Guyon raised her veil, and displayed a beauty that was still fresh and heavenly. She rolled her large eyes, clasped her hands, shed tears, and delivered an harangue, couched in allegorical language, of which I did not understand a single word. All the company repeated: "Adorable Jesus, love us even as we love you!"

Massillon told me in a whisper, that they were about to make me one of the elect. I was made to sit opposite Madame Guyon, who took my hands in hers, and cast an inflamed gaze upon me, which should have reduced my heart to cinders. I know not whether she perceived the mystery had produced its effect, but she cried out in an inspired voice: "I am about to empty myself of superabundant grace to fill the body of this elect one." I then saw her grow red, and then pale, roll dying eyes, choke, sigh, and fall prostrate, saying: "Enough; I am dying; unlace me!"

Madame de Chevreuse took her in her arms and carried her into another room. It appeared as though she were going to give up the ghost.

Fénelon arrived without greeting anyone; he went straight towards a big man, who sat apart in a corner. It was the Bishop of Chartres. I had recovered from my initiation, and I paid some attention to the faces. The Bishop had a slovenly and suspicious look; his face alone did not participate in the general plumpness of his person, and his hollow eyes, beneath their heavy brows, strayed foolishly to the floor. Fénelon, on the contrary, all curled and gallant, had just come from his toilette; he had not a movement which was not studied, and although his costume was one of extreme simplicity, one saw from a sort of elegance how much coquetry this simplicity contained: in conclusion, a kind of physiognomy passably monotonous, and a mouth which never smiled.

He sat down brusquely by the side of Godet, spoke in his ear, then in a low voice, then out loud, as the conversation grew warmer. "The house is watched," he said. At these words the devotees of either sex are in a hubbub; there is talking, shouting, running about, and it is as much as Fénelon can do to obtain a moment's silence. "My brethren, what are you afraid of? Is not the divine Jesus in the midst of us?"

Madame Guyon reappeared, somewhat calmer; people pressed round her and were silent. "Oh, what an admirable ecstasy I have had," she cried softly; "the soul of Jesus Christ was united with my soul; I really espoused him, and I remember an angel came to tempt me. Depart, I said to him, the mistress of the house has no concern with the servants." Alarm gave way to mysticism, and if the Heavens had fallen no one would have heeded it.

"Brethren," said Madame la Duchesse de Mortemart, "I have had two ecstasies this night. An angel appeared to me, bearing a pitcher of water and a little stove to burn Paradise and extinguish Hell."

"Sublime figure of Quietism . . ." cried Fénelon.

A noise which was heard on the stairs put an end to these follies, which Massillon was drinking in with both ears; soldiers appeared at the door, and a police officer, armed with a *lettre-de-câchet*, advanced into the room.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "do not be disturbed, the order, of which I am the bearer, only concerns Jeanne Rouvier de Lamotte, the widow Guyon, whom I arrest in the King's name."

A concert of lamentations burst out from every side. It might have been the abomination of desolation predicted by the prophet Daniel. "Our mother! our daughter! our sister! our friend!" Everybody was shouting, and Madame Guyon, retaining all her tranquillity, sought to console them with vague harangues.

"Lovers of God," she said, "I have foretold to you that hell would rise up to hinder the progress of the inward life and the formation of Jesus Christ in men's souls. The storm will be such that not one stone will be left upon another, and in all the earth there shall be trouble, war, and upheavals."

There was neither trouble, war, nor upheaval. Madame Guyon was confined at Vincennes, afterwards in the Bastille, where she

employed herself in composing commentaries on the Bible, and reflections concerning the inward life, as well as (to speak like the Quietists) "spiritual" poems. Fénelon was banished shortly afterwards to his diocese, and censured by the Pope for his *Maxims of the Saints*. Thus Bossuet triumphed over Quietism, which afforded me a delicious moment. Massillon always hid from me the secret of pure love, doubtless because he did not know it himself. I confess, for my part, it is entirely pleasant to receive grace from a pretty woman's hands.

Mademoiselle de Lenclos understood pure love in another fashion to Madame Guyon. She said, with regard to that visionary, that one did not need a body to be enamoured of God. In her youth Ninon only received men; in her old age her house was the rendezvous of the best society. I was presented to her by Massillon, who did not believe that, in frequenting her concerts and philosophic evenings, he was infringing the canons of the Church. I took such pleasure in her society that for two years I never failed to visit her twice a week. Seeing Ninon at the age of eighty, I was astonished that she had not still as many lovers as when she was twenty. I had proof that she did not want them.

Her beauty, by candle-light, was as great as in her prime, if it was not that her figure had lost something of its grace. Her complexion was so white and fresh and harmonious, that I asked her for a drop of her water of youth. "Wash yourself with sow's milk," she told me. I thought this was a jest; but the Abbé de Châteauneuf has since assured me that it was to this expedient she owed the preservation of her charms. Her face, of a lovely oval, had the purity of a Greek statue, her black and flashing eyes spoke a feeling of pleasure that was infectious, and her smile completed the work her glance had begun. Finally, her slow and honeyed voice went to the heart and beyond.

One experienced a feeling of pleasure merely at the sight of her. Chaulieu tried to make a paradox by saying that love had made his abode in the very wrinkles of her forehead. For this to be true Ninon had need first to have had wrinkles. She was admirable when she talked reason; she was admirable again when she spoke nonsense. She held a court with the same ease with which of old she had kept a male seraglio; young folk came to form themselves in her school, to take lessons in

politeness from her conversation and learn the fine manners of Court: for Ninon was of the nature of a touch-stone, and as she had never frequented any but great seigneurs she had made their elegance and nobility her own. Her amours had been public and often scandalous; but there had been a veneer of wit over all her past conduct, which caused it to be forgotten. Women relaxed their prudery so far as to attach themselves to Mademoiselle de Lenclos, and I can testify that this attachment was quite disinterested. Ninon would never have been guilty of such an infidelity to men. Such a prestige of celebrity and such enthusiasm for a woman of eighty is difficult to understand.

I confess, without a blush, that I formed a plan of attack against the repose which Ninon enjoyed, and I would fain persuade her she was younger than she thought.

"You come too late," she said to me, smiling, with that air which attracts instead of repelling.

A few days later I was informed of the true signification of this phrase, which I should have repelled indignantly, defending her against herself. I was not the only one who flattered himself he would renew Ninon's great days.

The Abbé Gédoyne, a kinsman of Mademoiselle de Lenclos, resolved to knit still closer the bonds of kinsmanship. He was not more than twenty-three, and was no Adonis; short of stature, with small eyes, a ruddy colour, and kindness in every feature. He gave the promise, at that time, of what he has become since: all candour, honesty, and merit. Such he appeared in Ninon's eyes; she took pity on the rust of the seminary, which spoiled his excellent qualities, and put his innocence to a rude test; a glance taught him that he had a heart. Ninon directed the whole arsenal of her coquetry against a child who did not know what a woman was. I, myself, who had wished to leap over all the preliminaries, paid no attention to this understanding of glance and speech. At last she revealed the whole to us with a *naïveté* which brought a blush to the cheek of several Court prudes, who apparently looked upon love as a forbidden fruit.

"Gentlemen," she said to us one evening, "you would never guess why the Abbé Gédoyne is not with us to-day? He is so tired out with his first conquest that he has taken to his bed. You know, or you do not know, that poor Gédoyne, who, on arriving here, knew nothing but his breviary, took it into his head

to fall in love with me. He followed the example of his fathers; for if Chapelle pushed hyperbole too far when he said that I have been to bed with Plato, it is none the less true that the Maréchal de Richelieu has been to bed with me—that was fifty years ago. The Abbé was wasting away, I did not wish to be cruel for the first time in my life; I permitted him to love me. As he was in a humour to profit by my permission that same instant, I postponed him, not to the Greek kalends but to that day two months. It was this morning that he presented himself to me to reclaim my promise; this time it was no question of a bill, as in the case of La Châtre, but of a word of honour. I was awaiting him on my sofa, and my word was redeemed. Dear Gédoyne was intoxicated, he kissed my hands, my feet, I know not what! At last he gave me a tender reproach.

"Graceless one! Why have you made me languish all this time?"

"Alas, my little Abbé," said I, "my tenderness has suffered as much as yours, but my self-conceit was stronger. I wished, from the rarity of the event, not to surrender to you before I was turned eighty years old, and that happened only this morning.

"Do not remind me," he rejoined, "of something I had forgotten, and promise never to leave me."

"You ask too much, Abbé," I replied; "I assure you I left the first the Colignys, the Villarceaux, the Sévigné's, the Condé's, the d'Albrets, the La Rochefoucault, the d'Effiats . . ."

I interrupted Ninon in this catalogue of names, to ask her why she put them all in the plural.

"Do you not know your history of France, M. Dubois?" she answered; "how should I judge of a family by a single specimen? To return to my adventure, Gédoyne is the happiest of men, and I should be indeed hard to please, if I were not the happiest of women. It will last as long as it can."

The rupture did not take place till a year afterwards, and if I had been there, I am sure I should have had my share of what was left of Ninon de Lenclos.

CHAPTER XVIII

DEATH OF THE MARQUIS D'ARCY—THE DUC DE CHARTRES AND HIS SISTER—THEIR ILLICIT LOVE—MARRIAGE OF THE LATTER—THE MAID OF HONOUR—MADAME DE VENTADOUR—THE LADIES OF THE OPERA—DUBOIS BEHIND THE SCENES—MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN—DUMESNIL—THE CONVENT—CANE AND SWORD—MONSIEUR'S BALL—THE DUEL—DESCOTEAUX—BARON—THE DUC DE CHARTRES AND THE ACTRESS

THE Prince and I were left without a governor after 1694. The Marquis d'Arcy died that year at Maubeuge. I confess, I did not lament him; he was a brave man, and of an agreeable conversation, but he was fit to make nothing of the Prince but a paladin. Thus he was never really in the exercise of his functions except at the war, and everywhere else he left me to direct our pupil, whom I had no difficulty in reconciling to the sweetness of peace.

Mademoiselle d'Orléans, who has not yet appeared in these memoirs, because I had scarcely seen her, had no resemblance with her brother. The scandalous gossip of the day said that she had the blood royal in her veins, and that a *tête-à-tête* of Madame with Louis XIV had not been without consequences. Mademoiselle Elisabeth-Charlotte had some features resembling the King's, but lost in the national ugliness of her mother. She even fell off as she grew up, and her fine skin became brown and coarse. At the age of fifteen she had an aged and ailing appearance; her big round nose and her deep-set eyes rendered her face disagreeable and common. She redeemed by her wit, talents, and manners these natural defects, which have only increased with age.

She had been brought up by Mesdames Clérembault and d'Effiat, who occupied themselves little with her until she was of an age when the child is merged in the woman. She was abandoned to careless and uneducated servants. Madame, incessantly busied, as I have related, with her interminable letters and her family portraits, took little thought of what became of her

CHAPTER XVIII

175

daughter, and only saw her when it pleased her governess to bring her. Monsieur was much attached to his children, but troubled himself as little about them. He sometimes embraced his daughter, who had no filial tenderness for him.

"Let me go, Monsieur," she would say; "I don't want to be kissed."

Monsieur, half annoyed, did not answer, but went and complained sorrowfully to Madame that her children loved her better than himself. He related to her Mademoiselle d'Orléans' hardly affectionate reception of him.

"*Mon Dieu*, Monsieur!" Madame replied, "why do you not correct them? They are your children as much as mine."

"I should not know how to scold them," he answered, "and they are not afraid of me; they only fear you."

Monsieur went and forgot his paternal grievances with the Chevalier de Lorraine and Madame de Grancey; Madame wrote her thousand and first letter; and, in the meantime, Mademoiselle d'Orléans felt the effects of such an education.

Her brother saw her often; latterly every day. The first time that I accompanied the Duc de Chartres to see his sister, they were both still so young that I paid no attention to certain indications which I remembered later; they gazed at each other long and with a singular expression; they whispered in each other's ears, laughed, turned red and white, embraced each other; it was something more than brotherly affection. I was, as any other would have been in my place, an inconvenient witness. The good pleasure of Mademoiselle forbade me to continue my observations. I soon perceived that she was throwing angry glances at me; they vexed me but little. The efforts which were made to injure me, and oust me from the Palais-Royal, left me in ignorance of my secret enemy, and it was not till 1698 that I recognised Mademoiselle d'Orléans as the voluntary cause of all that had been done against me. She would have finished by entirely destroying my credit with the Duc de Chartres.

This is why she wished me so much harm. By a childish compact, the Duc de Chartres rendered his sister an account of all his actions as well as of all his thoughts; she also concealed nothing from him; but the Prince's confession was doubtless of a different nature to her own. Necessarily, I played a great part in it, in virtue of my mysterious functions; briefly, the Prince

succeeded in giving me a villanous reputation. The particular services I rendered him, by purveying to his amours, revolted his sister, who implored him to dismiss me, and consequently to dispense with my ministry. It was her own cause she pleaded. I am grateful to my pupil for having resisted her pressing and reiterated supplications, and for not having sacrificed Dubois to love.

Yes, I shudder to write it, but it was love which reigned between brother and sister, doubtless a pure and virtuous love, a fashion of Quietism. In truth, I have not been present at all their interviews; but I am too well aware of the sentiments of the Duc de Chartres not to be able to certify that this love, however unfortunate and illegitimate, remained always as innocent as the affection, even more illegitimate, which has since been attributed to him for his daughter. Monstrous passions pursued him, but he did not go after them. Mademoiselle burned with like fires, but a hundred times more ardent, because they were concentrated on one and the same person. The Duc de Chartres, always devoted to change, sought in new passions a remedy for the one which at the bottom of his soul he shrunk from. He has never confessed it to me. I see, in this discretion, a proof of the esteem he had for my principles; all my compromises with conscience would not have gone as far as incest.

Madame, who, when she made a point of employing subtlety and perspicacity, had more of these qualities than anyone, soon discovered this secret love. She regretted, in spite of all her prejudices against *mésalliances*, that she had not married her daughter to the Duc du Maine, according to the King's wish. She sought in all her Courts of Europe to find a good marriage; it was all done suddenly; but the war of the allies frustrated this prudent determination. It was necessary to wait a year, and Louis XIV, to whom Madame revealed the causes of her grief, started in search of a Prince who would be ready to receive an ugly princess and the Protection of the King of France. A strange discovery urged them to hasten on their search for a husband.

Mademoiselle d'Orléans, knowing the projects that were being formed for an alliance for her, languished for some time, and fell grievously ill. The doctors, who do not feel the pulses of the heart, reassured Madame, who was anxious about her daughter's

condition. During this illness, the Duc de Chartres received the King's command not to visit his sister. This absence redoubled Mademoiselle's despair; she thought herself on the point of death, and resolved to destroy all traces of her deplorable passion. She wore round her body a belt containing the letters written to her by the Duc de Chartres; these must perish with her. One night, when the lady who watched by her bed had fallen asleep, she rose softly, collected the precious papers into a heap and set fire to them. The flames aroused her nurse, who uttered dire screams. Madame, hearing them, rushed in, in tears, expecting to find her daughter dead; she saw her surrounded by a mass of flaming papers, impatiently waiting for them to be reduced to ashes. Madame, with that presence of mind which she has frequently given instances of, flung herself upon the half-burned letters; and, in spite of her daughter's efforts to snatch them from her, she read there the evidence of that criminal love she was still endeavouring to doubt. The emotion displayed by Mademoiselle d'Orléans it would be impossible to describe; she threw herself at her mother's knees, begged her pardon with tears, cries, and groans. This crisis recalled her to life and health.

Louis XIV, whom Madame had informed, turned his eyes towards the son of the last Duc de Lorraine, whom he reinstated in his father's possessions on the signature of his marriage with Mademoiselle d'Orléans. The latter, having no more hope of indulging in her love with impunity, agreed to the alliance, and her resignation was more virtuous than her conduct had been. The Duc de Chartres raged at first, swore that this union should never take place, but was finally appeased, after a private interview with his mother, who treated him very harshly. An uninterrupted series of adventures of all ages left him no time to regret his loss. The marriage was celebrated sorrowfully and silently. The Duchesse de Lorraine never succeeded in conquering an attachment which had been stronger than any family tie. She, nevertheless, bore her husband numerous children, all of whom had a certain resemblance to the Duc de Chartres.

One day, at a time when I was innocent enough not to guess the brother and sister's position, I sought out the Duc de Chartres, whom I found more morose than ever.

"Well, my procurer," said he, forcing a smile, "has the hunt found a quarry?"

"I have your affair, Monseigneur," said I, looking pleased with myself; "this time I have laboured in the great world."

"Good; you have no more *grisettes* in hand then?"

"It is a bad year, Monseigneur; they become rarer every day; the great nobles make terrible ravages in them."

"So you have fallen upon an actress?"

"I was not reduced to such an extremity; I offer you a maid-of-honour."

"Of honour; and what do you expect me to do with her?"

"Anything you like. But let me not deceive you; I only mean a maid-of-honour to Madame."

"How is it I have not noticed her amongst all the Bavarian hideousness with which Madame is surrounded."

"The reason is, that she arrived yesterday. Her kinswoman, Madame de Ventadour, procured her appointment, and I hope the little one has the family virtues. Her name is Nathalie de La Bessière, and she calls herself Mademoiselle de Sery, under the pretext that it suits her better. Her father, who was ambassador to Holland, has not fortune enough to marry her."

"I will charge myself with the marriage expenses, reserving to myself the *droit de seigneur*, provided she is pretty; on that condition I would be every woman's lover."

"But not all at the same time, no doubt. Briefly, the arrangements are already made; the maid-of-honour has no more honour than is requisite, and to-morrow you shall be the judge."

The Duc de Chartres gave me a thousand caresses, and, as usual, put his destiny in my hands.

This Demoiselle de Sery had been pointed out to me by the Abbé Brigaut, her kinsman, and also that of Madame de Ventadour. This Abbé was nothing more than an adventurer; no one knew whence he came nor what he was. Madame de Ventadour and Monseigneur had held him over the baptismal font, and he made use of this spiritual paternity to assault fortune in every manner. He was still quite young, and had tried all the trades. He began by playing piety, until he had become a brother of the Oratory; but, disgusted at attaining no ecclesiastical honours, he became a ne'er-do-well once more, in the eyes of the Church, and made large profits by the sale of women. In spite of, or perhaps because of, this rascally trade, he was received everywhere, and his

godmother, Madame de Ventadour, was sometimes a party to his bargains.

Madame de Ventadour, who was lady of honour to the two Madames, before becoming the young King's governess, had justified the prophecy of the Abbé de La Victoire, who said to her on his wedding night: "Madame, it is not likely you would refuse to others what you would grant to M. de Ventadour." Indeed, it would be no easy matter to find a more hideous or deformed husband; and Madame de Ventadour, who was pretty and shapely, had not the strength to resist the Abbé de La Victoire, nor a thousand others, abbés or laymen. Old age and the convent alone could make her virtuous; and, in the decent phrase of M. de Ventadour, his *honour* was not so much *damaged* as his wife could have wished. I do not accuse Madame de Ventadour of having brought her neice with the intention of establishing her as the Duc de Chartres' mistress; but everything tends to make me believe it.

The Abbé Brigaut, who was aware of my relations with the Prince, advised me of Mademoiselle de Sery's arrival, and the praises he sang of her were only with intent to induce me to see her. Moreover, the fancy name that had been given her was sufficient evidence that they wished to respect her family name. Brigaut procured me an interview with Mademoiselle de Sery, to give me leisure to appreciate her means of pleasing. This young lady, who now figures under the style of Comtesse d'Argenton, and is no longer even pretty, had an attractive face at that time, rebellious eyes, a fine figure and wit. She did not bewray an Agnes of the provinces, and, as though Madame, her aunt, had prepared her in advance, she did not play the prude when I spoke to her of what the Duc de Chartres expected of her.

"Why does he wait?" she said, with eyes of intelligence.

These handsome dispositions did not diminish at the supper which the Prince made her accept; I was not present at it, but five months later I perceived, like everyone else, what had passed at dessert. Madame, who had an eye for everything, was as clear-sighted as myself. Mademoiselle de Sery's waist was too expansive for a maid-of-honour's. Moreover, the lavishness of her life, the money which poured through her hands, gave a handle to slander. Madame desired to have some light on the subject.

Madame de Ventadour was summoned; she denied the pregnancy of her kinswoman :

"We must question the Abbé Brigaut," she said, "who was the first to see my niece on her arrival here."

The Abbé Brigaut swore by all his gods that he was innocent.

"I will wager," said he, "that the Abbé Dubois, who knows everything, will be able to tell us something about the matter."

I appeared in my turn before my judge, and had little trouble to make myself out as white as snow.

"Meseems, Madame," said I, "that Monseigneur le Duc de Chartres is skilled enough in medicine to decide whether Mademoiselle de Sery be pregnant or not."

M. le Duc de Chartres was sent for; and Madame, with imperturbable coolness, questioned him on a matter upon which he alone could shed light.

"*Mon Dieu*, Madame," said he to his mother, "it is no business of mine, and Mademoiselle de Sery will be better able than anybody to answer these questions."

Madame ended in the quarter where she should have commenced; Mademoiselle de Sery arrived, pale and tremulous; she wept, stammered, and confessed everything.

"Now," said Madame, "I hope you are not going to be brought to bed in my house. Philippe, this concerns you."

The Duc de Chartres was afraid of being saddled with an irremovable mistress. However, the greatness of his soul won the day with him; Mademoiselle de Sery had her hotel, her servants and equipages. Her son was the Chevalier d'Orléans. For long she maintained herself in the position of favourite Sultana, multiplying her infidelities; her lover was never behind her in this matter.

What devices have I not imagined to counteract the empire which Mademoiselle de Sery acquired over the Prince? The young lady had particular and infallible methods of dominating, and the Duc de Chartres perceived when he left her that he had been led to subordinate his will to hers.

"The cunning of the baggage," he said to me; "she knew my good-tempered moments."

This was a notification which I did not let slip, and later I knew how to turn the Prince's good-tempered moments to my advantage. Meanwhile, in order to be rid of Mademoiselle de

Sery, who destroyed my peace of mind more than she hurt me, I called to my aid the prettiest faces I could unearth. After mature reflection, I chose a dancer at the Opera. I had a great opinion of these princesses, not that I knew them at first hand at this period; but musketeers and great lords spoke of them with unequivocal praise. Descoteaux, the famous flute-player, whom I had met for the first time at the house of the Prince de Conti, said these words to me, on the subject, which I have since held for a proverb :

"Love is found at every street corner; there is only pleasure at the Opera."

I started my campaign, therefore, mighty curious to test the royal morsels I was about to bargain with; the rank I held at the Palais-Royal permitted me to penetrate to the sanctuary behind the scenes. It was a country I had never seen but at a distance. I had not thought proper to be escorted by one of the eunuchs of the seraglio; I was fittingly attired in an abbé's costume, as a seeker of adventures. I strolled about for some time, an observer, in the midst of the decorations. The opera they were giving that night was *Cadmus*, for the *début* of Mademoiselle Maupin, who had a siren's voice and knew not a note of music. I admired, however, as the public did; a proud and masculine face, an imposing figure, are qualities as useful at the theatre as elsewhere. I remarked especially the beauty of her teeth, hair, and bosom. She represented Pallas; and when, spear in hand, she descended from heaven in a machine, the applause burst out on every side. She rose up nobly, lifted her helm, and saluted the audience, which did not fail to respond to her.

I was so little accustomed to ropes and traps and pulleys, by which I was surrounded, that I retreated hastily when Mademoiselle Maupin issued from her glory in the midst of the artifices. I felt myself falling, and, to keep my footing, caught hold of the petticoat of a little, lively dancer whose charms had struck me; she thought herself lost, as I did also, but we dropped, roughly enough, into the vaults beneath the stage; a fall of twenty feet could not have been softer.

"My lord!" cried my victim.

"My lady!" I added in the same tone.

Meanwhile, all was bustle on the stage; and whilst the lackeys were seeking torches and ladders, I had time to prove to my sub-

terranean nymph how little I was wounded. They reached us, and great was their astonishment to find us on such a good understanding. The place being dark, they did not notice the blushes of Mademoiselle Florence; that was the name of my dancing-girl. Our acquaintance, in spite of its ill-omened commencement, was not of a kind that I could wish to see ended. I only thought of the Duc de Chartres under the title of a successor; I do not remember whether I even admitted him as a participator. Florence pleased him as much as myself, and she had reason to congratulate herself on the greatness of soul of a Prince of the Blood. She gave him, in return for a large pension, a son whose body was formed rightly enough, to say nothing of his wits; he became M. l'Abbé de Saint-Albin, who has taken it into his head to be jealous of me. As for Florence, who died subsequently a very sorry death; she was too silly to detach the Duc de Chartres' heart from La Sery, and he soon grew tired of a body without a soul. She could not talk, and her only answer to any remark was a laugh. Her son resembled his mother with regard to mind but slightly; it was as though he had been made in despite of her.

The Duc de Chartres, meanwhile, spurred on by this trial, passed from Florence to the Maupin, and did not tire of opera girls. The Maupin had what her predecessor lacked; physically, as morally, she was a dragoon; she handled the sword like a fencing-master; her tongue was no less audacious. Her sorriest defect, in my opinion, was her passion for her own sex; this even led her into scandalous excesses. The Duc de Chartres did his utmost to convert her and did but half succeed. I had contrived this affair, which brought me nothing but vexations, with the alternative of having my throat cut by a woman.

Dumenil, an actor of the opera, having seen the failure of his amorous projects with La Maupin, as a scheme of vengeance planned to cause a quarrel between her and the Duc de Chartres. He had made my acquaintance, since my habit of going behind the scenes; he sought me out, and the resentment I felt against the Maupin incited me to second him. He related to me, amongst other exploits of this young lady, an incident which might have landed her in a prison, perhaps, even further. When she was a member of the Opera Company of Marseilles she became tenderly attached to a young person who was relegated by her family to a convent at Avignon; she was wrath at this separation,

and contrived to be accepted as a novice in the same convent. There she consecrated herself to the service of her mistress rather than of God. But, tired of the restraint to which both had to submit, the two friends formed a plan of escape which was more fortunate than prudent. A nun died, and was buried. Maupin, during the night, exhumes the body, carries it into the cell of her accomplice, and escapes with her, thanks to the outbreak of a fire. They took refuge in Germany, and let themselves be tried and found guilty in default. Maupin was condemned to be burned; but ten years having passed, she owed her impunity to the forgetfulness of justice and the protection of her lovers.

I retailed this adventure in the Palais-Royal, and seasoned it with a thousand witticisms which were not to the honour of the Maupin. The Duc de Chartres, whom I had indoctrinated, displayed an indifference to her for which she held me responsible. She addressed me a note, in which she promised to kill me outright; I knew she was capable of keeping her word, and replied to her that abbés, like women, did not fight. This answer given, I kept on the alert, and her anger was spent in insults which I scorned; for prudence's sake, however, I refrained from going abroad for a fortnight.

Indeed, she was a privileged duellist, considering that the edicts did not speak of women. She had taken lessons from Séranne, her first lover; the most skilful master of fence did not frighten her; she made children, she said, in reparation for her deadly strokes. Her courage was of a quality to chill my own, and, moreover, I should have deemed it shame to be slain by a woman. She took such delight in passing for a man, that she always dressed as one, and the women noticed so handsome a cavalier. That was somewhat her aim.

I know not how she learned or divined that Dumenil was the prime cause of the rumours that circulated about her; she hid her resentment from him, but one night after the play, when Dumenil was crossing the Place des Victoires, he was accosted by a man, who offered him a cane and a sword.

"Rascal," said the unknown, "I give you your choice."

"Thieves!" cried Dumenil.

"If you call out, you are a dead man," answered the voice, which he recognised,—*"pray, choose."*

"Maupin, dear, you are jesting; let us walk on together."

"I see, insolent varlet, that I must make use of the arm that is the due of cowards; turn round with a good grace, and the first cry you give will be your last—I swear it."

The bastinado was frankly applied, and Dumenil missed no portion of it.

"Now," said Maupin, with a laugh, "your watch and snuff-box."

"My dear comrade," said Dumenil, "you do not snuff, and it is too dark to see the time."

"Dumenil, obey and be off with you."

"I assure you, wretch, you ply a dangerous trade."

Mademoiselle Maupin departed with the snuff-box and the watch. On the morrow, Dumenil gave a detailed account to his comrades of the peril he had incurred the night before. "There were four foot-pads," he said, "and I am lucky to have escaped at the cost of a snuff-box set with diamonds and a Loiret watch."

"You are an impudent liar," interrupted Mademoiselle Maupin, "the proof is that here is your watch and snuff-box; I return them to you. I presume you will not return the stripes I have given you; a woman is enough against a coward and poltroon like yourself."

This adventure led me to expect an attack against myself, and I sacrificed Dumenil, in order to frame a treaty of peace which delivered me from every apprehension. But, notwithstanding this patched-up reconciliation, I was delighted at a scandal which disgusted the Duc de Chartres with this firebrand.

Monsieur gave a great ball at the Palais-Royal, on the occasion of his daughter's marriage; the Court was present, yet, none the less, amongst the crowd of guests, many who were not invited had stolen in. Mademoiselle Maupin, perhaps by arrangement with the Duc de Chartres, arrived in man's dress; we were the only persons to recognise her, and the Prince was delighted to see her ogling all the women with an ease and boldness which did credit to her habit.

"Dubois," said the Prince, "the Chevalier de Lorraine has been taken in by the label."

He had rivals even, and Monsieur asked everybody who was the pretty boy, and no one could tell him. His whim sent him in pursuit of the Maupin, who was equally busy round Madame d'Argenton. The latter, too politic to pay any open attention to any one save the Duc de Chartres, drove Mademoiselle Maupin

to despair by her silence. The impudent creature did not confine herself to words, and a cry from Mademoiselle de Sery, simultaneous with a gesture of the Maupin, angered a certain Laboëssière, a cousin of the insulted lady, whose cause he espoused.

"Fellow," said the young man, who was supported by two officers of the guard of Monsieur, "come out of here and account to me for your impertinence."

"With all the pleasure in the world," said the Maupin, whose irritation was greater, owing to the coldness of Mademoiselle de Sery; "come, all the three of you, and more if you like."

They descended to the courtyard, and swords were drawn. The three adversaries of La Maupin were left on the pavement. Monsieur, being informed that the pretty dancer he had noticed so particularly was a woman in disguise, prevented her arrest; on the contrary, she returned to the ball in the midst of the general admiration, and Mademoiselle de Sery withdrew in despair; but the Duc de Chartres, to please his titular mistress, never saw the Amazon again. He gave her up body and soul to Monsieur, who had too late perceived that she was a woman.

When one has once tasted the princesses of the stage, one cannot dispense with them; I had to turn my thoughts to replacing the Maupin, and at the risk of falling from Scylla to Charybdis, I passed from the Opera to the Theatre-Français. Descoteaux, the flute-player, again offered to aid me with his lights.

"At this moment," he said, "a new star is rising on the stage."

"Where does she lie?" I asked.

"At Baron's," he said.

Descoteaux described to me, with his wonted frankness, the sensual qualities of the Desmares, who was then only sixteen, and had had more than sixteen lovers. Baron was the champion rival of everyone, with everybody for his rival. It was to the house of this ex-comedian, vainest of all vain fellows, that I went to sample the charms of the Desmares.

This Baron, whom I had seen sometimes at the Prince de Conti's, who put up with his impertinences, on the score of revenge, had left the stage at the age when a man begins to become a good actor. No one ever knew the true motive of this precipitate retirement; I have heard it said that some great lord, whom Baron had made cuckold, had given him a birching

in form of reprisal. Baron sought to have satisfaction, which was refused him, and, to avenge himself for this irreparable insult, thought to punish the public by abandoning the stage, where, thanks to his face and the women, he had had such a prodigious success. He hoped that the King would intervene to reinstate him as a comedian; unfortunately he underrated his power as against the power of Louis XIV, had his trouble for nothing, and repented it for thirty years, until his vanity overweighed all other considerations, and he once more flung himself at the head of the public, who takes him in spite of his eighty years.

The personage whom I saw was no whit less ridiculous than the portraits that were made of him. Fatigue and illness had robbed him of his hair, for which he substituted a blonde wig, crimped in Roman fashion. His eyebrows and moustachio were dyed to match his effeminate face, which was rouged and powdered. His toilette surpassed that of the most affected dandies, his locks tied gallantly, his bonnet set with a cluster of russet-coloured plumes, infinitely tight hose, an elegant doublet, opened to display a fine lace shirt; he strutted as he walked with his head thrown backwards, and his patronising smile was directed to all indiscriminately; his voice, inflated with the accent of the stage, played ever the Cid or Britannicus, and his gestures harmonised with it; he was more a comedian than ever.

The Desmares, mighty prodigal with her caresses and outbursts of gaiety, was always flinging herself into Baron's arms. He would say to her mincingly:

"Little one, respect my coiffure, it will be honoured to-night by the perfumed kisses of a Duchess."

"You told me this morning it was a Marquise," put in Descoteaux.

"I thought it was a Princess," said the Desmares. "All the same, my son, those great ladies are very difficult to please, and you do not suffice them."

"My dear," resumed Descoteaux, "they all remember seeing you play the part of Love in Psyche."

"I was only six years old at that time," answered Baron, vexed at this reminder.

"As for me," growled Descoteaux, "I was only twenty at the time, and I am the same age as yourself."

"Desmares," cried Baron, red with anger, "I will leave

Monsieur to persuade you that I am more than a hundred years old; I will give you proofs of my youth in another place."

He left the room, pirouetting, and quoting the couplet:

"Je suis jeune, il est vrai; mais aux âmes bien nées
Le talent n'attend pas le nombre des années."

During this amusing altercation I had leisure to observe Desmares. She is no more than the shadow of herself to-day, and one reads upon her pale face the inscription: *Fructus belli*. At this period she was fresh, white, well-made, lively, and fascinating. She was not loved, she was adored. The little person had met with success on every side, and her success was partly due to her appearance; the *habitués* of the wings, the Marquesses and Viscounts, consorted with her, and, with the permission of Baron, her master and gallant, she had distributed her favours to the most urgent amongst them. She readily diverted herself with the men, laughed and sang and led a merry life. However, she had her capricious refusals. She might have extracted many a deed of endowment; but, so long as pleasure alone was her motive, her disinterestedness was a perfect prodigy. She desired no one to be ruined for love of her; but she was beginning now to repent of her simplicity.

I drew her into a corner of the room, and she thought at first I was going to speak for myself; her "no" was on her lips.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "do you know how fair a use might be made of so many attractions?"

"You can tell me nothing new on that chapter," she retorted.

"Perhaps; at any rate, I shall be happy to try."

"My dear sir," she quoted,

"You ought, meseems, to better arm your breast,
And reason first ere you try such a plan."

"Tis for you, fair Princess, to reason a little, and you will accept."

"Not I, unless there is to be a complete metamorphosis."

"Here it is; twenty-two years old, a handsome face, wit, and a Prince of the Blood into the bargain."

"Write it down that I accept with my eyes shut."

"Follow me then, my goddess."

"Where are you taking me?"

"To the Palais-Royal."

This name produced a magical effect on this virtue so accustomed to capitulations, and my fair pointed out the road to me. She already knew how to *put on a face which never blushed*. In truth, her sense of gratitude owed me some compensation; caprice was mixed up with it, and I did well to possess myself in patience for lack of aught better to do. The Duc de Chartres was in bed when we arrived, and I entered his apartment alone to inform him of the agreeable surprise.

"Plague!" said he, "Sery is coming to find me to-night. What is to be done, man of expedients?"

"Say that you are ill, and prove that you are nothing of the kind."

This advice was followed, and Madame Desmares played the part of the Comtesse d'Argenton. Nor was this the last time.

The Duc de Chartres again almost lost his head over this actress, who had already the experience of a woman of forty. She spared no means of acquiring influence over the Prince's senses, animating them with all the voluptuousness of her own. Such was the power of this siren that, four years after having left her, the Duc de Chartres came back to her with all the attraction of novelty. What she desired happened, however much imagination may have served her in the circumstances. She became with child, and the Duc de Chartres accepted the responsibility of more than one. This pregnancy was a wonder to him, and one day, when he was slapping the nicely rounded belly, he repeated a host of paternal endearments.

"Ah, it's going well, Charlotte, it's the weeds that thrive; I think our child wants nothing."

"Nay, Monseigneur," answered the Desmares, "the hair has still to be made, try and forget not one of them."

It was a girl who was born before the time, and I think I may assert that she had plenty of hair.

CHAPTER XIX

DUBOIS AS DIPLOMATIST—M. DE BARBEZIEUX—M. DE TALLARD, FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO ENGLAND—THE CHEVALIER DUBOIS IN LONDON—SAINT EVREMONT AND THE DUCHESSE DE MAZARIN—QUOTATION FROM A LETTER OF HER CHAPLAIN—LORD STANHOPE—DUBOIS IN ENGLISH PAY—ROMANS AND STUARTS—DENUNCIATIONS OF M. DE TALLARD—THE LETTRE-DE-CACHET—DUBOIS AT MARLY—ENGLISH WOMEN

I HAD often spoken to the Duc de Chartres of the pleasure I should have in finding myself engaged in a political negotiation. The occasion presented itself for my making an attempt of my talents as a diplomatist or intriguer. The marriage of Made-moiselle de Blois had already shown what I could do. M. de Tallard was ambassador of the King of France in England, since the recognition of the Prince of Orange as King by Louis XIV, in the teeth of the exiles of Saint-Germain. However, in spite of this peace of exhaustion, William was secretly plotting to break it; this he succeeded in doing two years later. M. de Tallard wrote to request a sort of spy, a secretarial factotum who would work under his orders for the maintenance of the treaty of Riswick. The Duc de Chartres heard talk of the difficulty of finding the man they wanted; he recalled me to the King's recollection, who had not forgotten the marriage of his bastard, and the genius I had exhibited in the circumstances.

"I consent, Monsieur," he said to his nephew, "to send your Dubois to London, on condition that on his return he does not ask me for a Cardinal's hat. Send him in my behalf to Barbezieux."

The Prince acquainted me with the King's consent, and, in my ambassadorial zeal, I wished to set off without delay. I repaired three or four times uselessly to M. de Barbezieux, who, with his lordly mania for making people wait in his ante-chamber, disdained to receive me. The first time, I heard him in his closet playing with his dog, whom he called, I know not why, *La Fontange*;

the second, he was talking with Fagon, his physician, the same who killed him by dint of blood-letting; on the third, he was busied with no less than four sultanas, drinking, laughing, and making love. Tired out with these vain attempts, I insisted upon entering, making use of the King's name, of that of the Duc de Chartres, and of my own, which was short, but lavishly repeated. I was introduced at the moment when M. de Barbezieux was escaping by a door behind. I did not lose courage, but obtained the company of the Duclos, whom the minister knew professionally. She had the entry of his closet, and there I came under her safeguard into M. de Barbezieux's presence; he was stretched on a divan, half undressed, and he would have been mightily embarrassed to prove that he had been fasting.

Barbezieux, son of the Marquis de Louvois, had his father's handsome features, but without their hardness; when he was in a good humour, his face became gracious and engaging. His person came out triumphantly from any encounter: he was no less skilled in work than in pleasure; in manners as elegant as in speech; he had his father's subtlety, and, in addition, a lively wit, varied, and to the point; the greatest ladies ran after his favours. Thus he would sacrifice the ministry to parties of women, where he was the only moustachio present. With these qualities he had enough pride, anger, and insolence to make himself hated by his best friends. However, as he had insinuated himself into the good graces of the Maintenon, he dominated Louis XIV to such a degree that he could make him change the time of his councils to suit the convenience of his orgies. He was accused of embezzlement, and in truth his daily expenditure was so extravagant that he needed inexhaustible resources for so much money. His mother, though she was so rich, shut her purse to him even more than her heart.

The Duclos procured for me all M. de Barbezieux's good-will, and he made out my commission, delivered a few exhortations to me, begged me to send him the newest possible English beauties, and dismissed me abruptly in favour of the Duclos.

I have since suspected that Mademoiselle de Sery, who dreaded my influence over the Duc de Chartres' mind, had warmly entreated my departure. Nevertheless, after adapting my accoutrement to my new position, almost without farewells, that I might have the fewer regrets, I started under the title

and costume of the Chevalier Dubois, because, in England and Holland, Abbés are not received at the customs. It was sufficient to change the label on my bag.

My journey from Paris to London was as insignificant as the road from Paris to Versailles. I accomplished it in my carriage with the faithful Purl, who was destined to succumb to the fogs of the Thames. I had not even the experience of a gale, and I went, booted and curled, to pitch my camp in M. de Tallard's Hotel. He received me, at first, with a master's protection; he was not slow to discover that he had found one in me. M. de Tallard is one of those men morally and physically little, whose ambition resembles the golden Colossus of Nebuchadnezzar, which had feet of clay. Jealousy has made him visibly lean, and every success obtained by another causes him to lose an ounce of flesh. I do not think he has ever looked anyone in the face in his life. Were he King of France, he would wish to be King of China. Any wit he may possess is spoiled by his miserable envy, which can see none in anybody else. Such he was then, such he remains now. His greatest chagrin was caused by the embassies obtained by d'Harcourt through the channel of Madame de Maintenon. He covered his perfidy beneath the fairest exterior, and wrapped up even his insults in politeness. I have never seen a more adroit intriguer, although he is timid in his conceptions. He had only asked for a subordinate spy; he took umbrage at the position which I assumed on my arrival.

"Monsieur," he said, after examining my credentials, "I beg you to show yourself but little in the town; it is essential to my projects that you remain unknown."

"However, Monsieur," said I, "I have letters of introduction given me by Mademoiselle Ninon de Lenclos to M. de Saint-Evremond."

"Really, you distress me; the first society in London congregates in that house."

"Indeed, Monsieur; in that case I shall combine pleasure with utility."

"I should be delighted to feel you are satisfied; but I must beg you to pay attention to the fact that the Chevalier Dubois is not an ambassador of France."

"You need only vouch me to make sure of it, and it is to you only that I will report the negotiations I may carry out."

"I warn you, M. le Chevalier, that I only answer for my own errors."

I presented myself that same night at the house of M. de Saint-Evremont, who lived in a state of contemplative love with Madame la Duchesse de Mazarin. Around these two fine intelligences, escaped from Versailles, the first lords of Parliament and the best English writers congregated. General conversation was in French, with all the refinements of the Paris *salons*. I was welcomed, caressed, and appreciated, under the auspices of Ninon, who had written amongst other things that I was a compound of sense and spirit. I soon remarked that the English fair sex has the most favourable prejudices in regard to our nation, which is naturally delicate in love affairs. Moreover, Saint-Evremont was quite right in saying that the fine intellects of England are a mean, as it were, between the courtiers of Paris and the burgomasters of Amsterdam.

Saint-Evremont, who had been at the head of literature for more than half-a-century, was at least eighty-five years old at this time. For more than thirty years he had been an exile in England at the request of the Duc de Mazarin, who hoped, by removing him, to disgust the Duchesse with her grey-haired lover; the Duchesse was inconsolable at Saint-Evremont's absence, until she had overcome wind and tide to rejoin him. Saint-Evremont had the most beautiful old age, and his mind was as youthful as at the period when he shone with all his lustre; in his calm and majestic face, his silver locks, in his affable and eloquent speech there was a charm which was irresistible at any age. He told stories with a studied ease; he dazzled the hearer with his play of points and antitheses; he deemed himself happy, and knew how to be so. The liberality of the King of England prevented him from regretting the French Court; his friends and the Duchesse de Mazarin shared the task of enlivening his declining years; his philosophy was not afraid of death. The prodigious vogue obtained by his works had somewhat diminished, but his reputation was not inferior to his wit. He was fond of painting his own portrait, which he repeated in a hundred different fashions, only changing the expressions. He said to us, with that air of satisfaction which never left him: "I live in a condition which is despised by those who have everything, envied by those who have nothing, enjoyed by those who make happiness depend upon

reason; I am neither superstitious, nor impious, nor prodigal; I praise nature and do not complain of fortune; I hate crime; I suffer mistakes; I pity misfortune, and I do not seek what is bad in men in order to decry them." He was a white-haired Plato. How far a cry from our men of letters, envious, malicious, and mean to this philosophical and courtly writer!

The Duchesse de Mazarin retained her beauty though past fifty; I am so little astonished that she should still have admirers, that I would gladly be amongst their number. I could not admire enough her fine black eyes melting beneath her long lashes; her smile had an angelic expression; and her hands were perfect. I had the good fortune to meet with her friendship, but that, to my chagrin, was merely Platonic. She was indulgent to my bad habits, which were not corrected by the English climate; and my conversation particularly pleased her. She made me the confidant of her adventures and sufferings, not the least of which had been her marriage.

She had wedded the choice of her uncle the Cardinal Mazarin, the son of the Marquis de La Meilleraye, one of the richest nobles at Court, to whom she brought a dowry of more than twenty-eight millions. The Duc de Mazarin was mad with jealousy; had he been a hundred times more handsome he would have been hideous in comparison with his wife; his qualities were brutalised by his constant terror of not being alone in his possession of the woman he had married. He had been brought up in the best of discipline, was polished, courageous, and well-informed; the Duchesse de Mazarin turned him into an idiot; the priests made him a ridiculous bigot. On several occasions the Duchesse, who was gallant, like many of her compeers, had fled the conjugal bed, going in search of another in Rome or England, in which latter country she finally settled; the Duc de Mazarin wrote to her: "Come back, my queen, I prostrate myself at your feet, everything shall be forgotten." She came back owing to want of money, but soon departed again, more furious than ever with her husband; it was amongst her grievances that he would not let her sleep alone. This husband, as is so often the case, survived his wife a few years, and carried with him everywhere her embalmed body in an ebony box. I think I have seen him sometimes at the Court, where the King treated him with honourable familiarity. I have in my hands a letter from his

almoner, written to Madame de Mazarin a few days before her death; she has added this note in her own hand: "*If I were sure that the man whose wife I am would go to Paradise to-morrow, I would pray for his death to-day.*" Here are some fragments of this curious letter which has been given me in memory of her:

"My poor lord has come to such a degree of sickness that his reason is almost gone; he travels constantly from Brittany to Alsace, with no motive, but with the utmost haste; he stays for days communing only with his rosary and a little image of the Virgin which he wears on his sleeve. He does not like me to leave him for a moment, making me dine at his table and sleep in his room, because he is afraid of dying without a confession. He often harks back to you, Madame, asking when he will see you again? That is his most ordinary idea. He goes and sits on the Port-Louis, in the midst of the sailors, and questions them as to the time it takes to cross over to England. I think he will end by going in search of you. In the meantime, he is employing a host of painters to paint your portrait, and he dwells in Nantes, for preference, because he can see the sea. His château is everlastingly full of monks and pilgrims. He lately wished to make a crusade in Palestine; this is not his sorriest project. Yesterday he summoned his servants to him, and said to them: 'My friends, in the Bible they cast lots for the spoils; it shall be the same with my household.' A lottery was very seriously arranged, and the least singular result of chance was not that of the sweep who became secretary. I was fortunate in not being made by him to accept the post of cook. People who make a trade of religion lead him on to incredible follies, besides devouring his revenues. The superb statues he has brought from Italy have been mutilated by the barbarians; the hammer starts the work of destruction, and the brush is commissioned to clothe all the nudities."

I noticed in the little Court of Madame de Mazarin the most celebrated personages amongst the Whigs and Tories. One saw there indiscriminately, the Duke of Dorset, who was one of the most handsome of the courtiers of Charles II, and who reaped every advantage from the difference there is between *wicked* verses and bad verse; Milady Littleton, who remembered she had once been pretty; Milady Barry, daughter of a gentleman, who had been a woman of pleasure and an actress, and had

been left with enough wit to make people forget it all; Milady Howe, daughter of Prince Rupert and an actress named Mistress Hughes. Amongst these names—to which I attach a pleasant memory—I will not omit that of Lord Stanhope, who became my friend, and remained so until his untimely death. Massillon and he are the only men whom I have really loved, out of sympathy perhaps.

Lord Stanhope, who was not of the family of Chesterfield, but of an old and noble family in the county of Nottinghamshire, may be looked upon as being, after myself, the most able diplomatist of his time; we were worthy to understand, and mutually admire one another. Lord Stanhope was of as thin and sickly a figure as I was myself, although he was much younger. His journeys to Spain and Germany had formed his judgment and taste; his talents inclined him towards ministerial affairs; he proved since, however, that he would have made an excellent officer. He found a certain analogy, very flattering to myself, between his mind and my own, and, above all, between our two epicurean philosophies. They had more than one occasion to consort together, both at table and elsewhere.

Lord Stanhope conceived a real passion for the Chevalier Dubois, who mocked at the Abbé as of old; he conducted me into the great society of London; he presented me everywhere, with praises which gained me as many friends as he possessed himself.

The French envoy, I must confess, was treated by the English almost as a compatriot. Of my diplomatic operations I speak in another work; I displayed remarkable skill in them. The English Government perceived that I was more of an ambassador than M. de Tallard himself, and I had the weakness or the wit, to take money for harmonising the interests of Louis XIV and William III. It was merely a matter of shutting my eyes to the designs of England, and I received with two hands. I will not justify this conduct, which has the precedent of greater men than the Chevalier Dubois; but I avenged myself thus, for the unjust oblivion in which the King had left me to vegetate, for all recompense for the marriage of his bastard with a Prince of the Blood. Finally, I protest, that since the death of Louis XIV, I have not touched a gold piece of His Britannic Majesty's.

Lord Stanhope loved pleasure with that moderation which

almoner, written to Madame de Mazarin a few days before her death; she has added this note in her own hand: "*If I were sure that the man whose wife I am would go to Paradise to-morrow, I would pray for his death to-day.*" Here are some fragments of this curious letter which has been given me in memory of her:

"My poor lord has come to such a degree of sickness that his reason is almost gone; he travels constantly from Brittany to Alsace, with no motive, but with the utmost haste; he stays for days communing only with his rosary and a little image of the Virgin which he wears on his sleeve. He does not like me to leave him for a moment, making me dine at his table and sleep in his room, because he is afraid of dying without a confession. He often harks back to you, Madame, asking when he will see you again? That is his most ordinary idea. He goes and sits on the Port-Louis, in the midst of the sailors, and questions them as to the time it takes to cross over to England. I think he will end by going in search of you. In the meantime, he is employing a host of painters to paint your portrait, and he dwells in Nantes, for preference, because he can see the sea. His château is everlastingly full of monks and pilgrims. He lately wished to make a crusade in Palestine; this is not his sorriest project. Yesterday he summoned his servants to him, and said to them: 'My friends, in the Bible they cast lots for the spoils; it shall be the same with my household.' A lottery was very seriously arranged, and the least singular result of chance was not that of the sweep who became secretary. I was fortunate in not being made by him to accept the post of cook. People who make a trade of religion lead him on to incredible follies, besides devouring his revenues. The superb statues he has brought from Italy have been mutilated by the barbarians; the hammer starts the work of destruction, and the brush is commissioned to clothe all the nudities."

I noticed in the little Court of Madame de Mazarin the most celebrated personages amongst the Whigs and Tories. One saw there indiscriminately, the Duke of Dorset, who was one of the most handsome of the courtiers of Charles II, and who reaped every advantage from the difference there is between *wicked* verses and bad verse; Milady Littleton, who remembered she had once been pretty; Milady Barry, daughter of a gentleman, who had been a woman of pleasure and an actress, and had

been left with enough wit to make people forget it all; Milady Howe, daughter of Prince Rupert and an actress named Mistress Hughes. Amongst these names—to which I attach a pleasant memory—I will not omit that of Lord Stanhope, who became my friend, and remained so until his untimely death. Massillon and he are the only men whom I have really loved, out of sympathy perhaps.

Lord Stanhope, who was not of the family of Chesterfield, but of an old and noble family in the county of Nottinghamshire, may be looked upon as being, after myself, the most able diplomatist of his time; we were worthy to understand, and mutually admire one another. Lord Stanhope was of as thin and sickly a figure as I was myself, although he was much younger. His journeys to Spain and Germany had formed his judgment and taste; his talents inclined him towards ministerial affairs; he proved since, however, that he would have made an excellent officer. He found a certain analogy, very flattering to myself, between his mind and my own, and, above all, between our two epicurean philosophies. They had more than one occasion to consort together, both at table and elsewhere.

Lord Stanhope conceived a real passion for the Chevalier Dubois, who mocked at the Abbé as of old; he conducted me into the great society of London; he presented me everywhere, with praises which gained me as many friends as he possessed himself.

The French envoy, I must confess, was treated by the English almost as a compatriot. Of my diplomatic operations I speak in another work; I displayed remarkable skill in them. The English Government perceived that I was more of an ambassador than M. de Tallard himself, and I had the weakness or the wit, to take money for harmonising the interests of Louis XIV and William III. It was merely a matter of shutting my eyes to the designs of England, and I received with two hands. I will not justify this conduct, which has the precedent of greater men than the Chevalier Dubois; but I avenged myself thus, for the unjust oblivion in which the King had left me to vegetate, for all recompense for the marriage of his bastard with a Prince of the Blood. Finally, I protest, that since the death of Louis XIV, I have not touched a gold piece of His Britannic Majesty's.

Lord Stanhope loved pleasure with that moderation which

forms its delight; he assembled at mysterious suppers the most charming damsels in London, and a few friends, in the number of whom he had admitted me. These were the most delicious moments I have passed. Amongst the guests there was the grandson of the first Duke of Ormond, who consecrated his life to the Stuart cause. This second Duke of Ormond, faithless to that unprofitable devotion, had attached himself to the Prince of Orange and Queen Anne; he felt remorse in his heart of hearts, and later this got him accused of high treason, and brought him back to the side of the Pretender. He was already a matured man, a profound politician, and a negotiator as well as a general, capable of everything, fit for everything. At Stanhope's suppers, he directed the conversation, which was more serious and instructive than one would have expected under the circumstances. The Duke of Ormond brought up the Stuarts on every opportunity.

"Milord," I said to him one day, with the ease of a man who lies, "I have often heard King James speak of your worth, in the Council as in the field."

"M. le Chevalier," he replied, with emotion, "you will tell His Majesty from me, that I would lay down my life to see him assume once more the rank of his ancestors."

This declaration might have been his ruin. Happily we had no desire to betray ourselves; it would have been a general betrayal.

The ancient Romans were more interesting to Lord Stanhope than all the Stuarts of Saint-Germain. He knew them so intimately that one might have taken him to be their contemporary. He pretended to find the whole of modern civilisation in them.

"I defy the poorest mind," he said, "not to acquire statesmanship by reading Tacitus."

It was his breviary. He esteemed me highly, although I did not derive my words and actions from the same source; however, he reproached me with the superficial attitudes of my mind.

"Master William," he said to me, "you have more wit than Sancho, and he had overmuch; like him, you expend it in sallies, trifling points and verbal quips; it becomes you well, but strength of mind and depth of judgment seem to you superfluities."

I finally succeeded in causing him to change his opinion; so

much so, that he compared me in English verse to a precipice which at a distance looks like a grassy plain. Whence it comes that I have always been taken for a criminal, a buffoon, or a knave.

I had made the Chevalier Dubois the fashion; there was no great *fête* at which he did not assist; I dined with ministers; I supped with actresses, and the more I was sought after, the more was the Ambassador deserted. He was in high dudgeon at this, and thought fit to pull me up in the midst of my encroachments on his office. He wrote to the King, and to M. de Torcy, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and to M. de Barbezieux, and made a mighty noise about the secret relations I was maintaining with England.

"Sire," he wrote to the King, "Your Majesty has no need of two Ambassadors in England; say the word, and I will retire."

"Monsieur," he wrote to M. de Torcy, "the Chevalier Dubois is holding nocturnal gatherings with English lords; he is hatching plots against the King of France."

"My dear Barbezieux," he wrote to the latter, "this knave Dubois is degrading my authority; he gives himself out as Ambassador in haunts of vice; besides, he calls himself my coadjutor."

Subsequently these fine epistles fell into my hands. Torcy made such an outcry that he was allowed to send me a *lettre-de-cachet*, with a command to return instantly to France.

I signalled my departure from London by a petty vengeance which exasperated Tallard's vanity. I invited Court and Town to a rout in the Ambassador's very hotel. The preparations had been made with diligence and secrecy. I went and installed myself, under the pretext of having business to conclude, in Tallard's room. He rose in his dressing-gown.

"You are in full dress," he said to me, with an air of satisfaction; "do you leave to-day?"

"At mid-day," I answered deliberately.

Suddenly a sound of carriages was heard in the streets; the gates of the hotel were thrown open.

"What is it?" asked the Ambassador. "Visitors so early; I am not even dressed."

"It is unnecessary, Monsieur," I answered, whilst he was watching the arrivals from the window.

"The Chevalier Dubois," repeated the lackeys, and the guests were introduced into my apartments.

"What! M. le Chevalier," said Tallard, "you receive people—"

"Only the first families in England," I answered, "King William would come himself if he was not at Amsterdam, occupied in receiving the Czar of Russia."

The carriages arrived in a line, and my name came every moment to deafen the ears of the Ambassador.

"Look," I said, "there is Saint-Evremond, Lord Stanhope, the Duke of Ormond, the Duke of Essex, Lady Temple! Adieu, M. Tallard, you have no commands for me at Versailles?"

"Yes; that you will remain there *in saecula saeculorum*."

"Amen," said I.

I descended to do the honours of my assembly, and at the same time to pay my adieux, and I departed universally regretted except by the Ambassador. Since this time I have conducted a regular correspondence with several nobles at that Court, where the Chevalier Dubois is not yet forgotten.

I felt a certain alarm on returning to France; this was far from being dispelled when my *lettre-de-cachet* sent me straight to the Bastille, as a prisoner of importance. I was by no means flattering myself that I should issue from it with the whiteness of innocence, when, upon an order of M. de Barbezieux, I was set at liberty; I went to thank him, and he said to me:

"You have not to thank me, Abbé, but Ninon, who, hearing of your misfortune, came to answer for you. She told me of the death of her friend the Duchesse de Mazarin."

"She is dead!" I cried.

"Of old age, it appears," he answered lightly. "However, go and reward Ninon for the service she has rendered you, for, but for her you could have lived and died, and come to life again in the Bastille, and no one the wiser."

"And M. le Duc de Chartres?"

"Bah! He is busy making bastards, and laughs at Abbés."

"Monsieur, I have ordered two or three pale faces for you from London, such as we are wont to call fair English women."

I drew in great breaths of the air of liberty; the first use I made of it was to present myself at Marly where the King and Court were. I assumed an air of assurance, and took a walk through the gardens, where I knew I should meet Louis XIV;

I saw him in the distance giving orders to his gardeners. The Duchesse de Bourgogne was hanging on his arm; an ugly face, which was maintained at a respectful distance, revealed to me Le Nostre, the most famous designer of gardens of that time in France. The King saw me at the same instant; whether from distraction, or that the accusations of Tallard had passed out of his mind, he saluted me with a kindness which encouraged me to accost him.

"M. l'Abbé," he said, with a benevolent air, "this comes of having overmuch wit; you can not go abroad without making a business."

"And exciting envy, Sire," I answered quickly.

"M. de Tallard," he resumed, "makes you out a criminal of State."

"In revenge, Sire; I know not what one could make of him."

"I know him; and what he says does not seem to me an article of faith; but one should not display one's disagreements to foreign eyes; I recalled you for fear of scandal."

"Monsieur," said the Duchesse de Bourgogne, "is it true that all Englishwomen have blue eyes and fair hair?"

"Madame," I answered adroitly, "that would be as though one who had seen you were to attribute the praises you deserve to every princess in the world."

"Sire," said the little Duchess with a laugh, "this is the soft speech of diplomacy."

"Monsieur," said Le Nostre, "is it true that King William has not found my gardens to his liking?"

"He has called in artists from Holland who have upset all your avenues."

Poor Le Nostre uttered a sigh, such as a king might, when he had been told of the loss of a battle.

My welcome at the Palais-Royal was weighing upon me. My first glance convinced me that from the smallest to the greatest I had been forgotten. My place, however, had not been taken. I found the Duc de Chartres a father of bastards and of legitimate children. Mademoiselle de Sery had played the coquette so well, that the Prince was unable to be rid of her; he had ceased to love her, and was astonished that she loved him still. His constancy alone had not improved. He seemed almost indifferent at my return.

"Is it you, Abbé?" he said; "I had been led to believe you were a man ripe for hanging."

"I hope, Monseigneur, that will not be in your lifetime."

"Why not? Better men than you have been hanged! Do you know that I have been very nearly bored during your absence?"

"I told you that I was indispensable to you."

"Oh, I do not say that. However, what is the news from London?"

"The women there are charming, and you shall judge of them from a sample."

"Good, my son; now I recognise my Abbé Dubois."

I was so vexed at this cool reception that I said to Massillon, when I confided my grievance to him:

"The charm is broken; friendship is but a habit. So long as I was on the Prince's back I drove him as I liked; I ought never to have let go, and I have done well to return to him."

The importation arrived as I had foreseen; a cargo of fair Englishwomen, forwarded to me by my friend Stanhope, was the means of renewing my intimacy with the Duc de Chartres, who once more called me his saviour.

"Abbé," said he, "the two Williams who conquered England are not worth Guillaume Dubois."

CHAPTER XX

THE DEATH OF MONSIEUR — INDIFFERENCE OF THE COURT — DUBOIS TAKES THE TIDINGS TO THE ROYAL FAMILY

ON the 8th of June 1701, Monsieur's household being at Saint-Cloud, he went to see the King at Marly. The Duc de Chartres had begged him to obtain a command for him in the army of Spain. Louis XIV, who was engaged at his devotions, received him ill enough.

"My brother," said he, "to-day is an Ember-day fast, I hope you have not broken it."

"Through a pardonable forgetfulness, Sire, I ate a biscuit."

"It seems to me, my brother, that you are on the way to follow the example of your son, who, according to Madame de Chartres, is the first heretic in my kingdom."

"You must have been wrongly informed, Sire; the Duc de Chartres has been reared in religious principles which render him worthy of your protection; I came to beg you to grant him an employment in your armies."

"No, my brother, I do not wish to expose the lives of persons of my family; we have enough generals."

"But, Sire, lack of occupation is an incentive to vice. . . ."

"Enough; the Duc de Chartres shall not go to the wars in my lifetime. Thus I shall deprive him of the means, if not of the desire to hurt me."

The harshness of this refusal disheartened Monsieur, and he went back to Saint-Cloud with a violent headache; the Père Feuillet, whom he met, having spoken to him of the fast.

"Father," said he, "do I break the fast if I eat a biscuit?"

"Eat a calf, but be a good Christian," retorted Feuillet; and he turned his back on him in anger.

This fresh affront set a climax to Monsieur's indisposition. He went to meet Hébert, the mad woman, took her hands in his, and burst into tears.

"What is the matter with your Royal Highness?" she said, weeping also.

"Alas, my poor Hébert, it is all over with me; I am going to die."

"Die. Why die? In any case I am ready."

I passed through the garden where this interview took place, and the Demoiselle Hébert, who had recovered all her reason, called me, and begged me to fetch a doctor. Monsieur, feeling worse, sat down on the turf.

"A doctor that Monsieur requires!" I cried. "Fagon happens to be at the Château now."

"Fagon!" interrupted Hébert. "Why not the Chevalier de Lorraine or the Marquis d'Effiat?"

"Hébert," said the Prince, in a feeble voice, "it is useless to create an alarm; it would frighten Madame too much. You and Dubois will help to support me to the house."

The Duc de Chartres, who had been a little way off, ran up at the noise, and seeing his father's inflamed face, uttered cries which threw all the servants in Saint-Cloud into confusion.

Monsieur was carried to his bed; the mad woman, the Duc de Chartres, and myself refused to leave him. At ten o'clock the apoplexy was past remedy, and Gendron, after examining the patient with tears in his eyes, silently seized the Duc de Chartres' arm and led him to the clock, and made a circle of the dial with his finger; the Prince understood this warning, and his grief burst out violently. The mad Hébert neither prayed nor wept, but stationed by the pillow, motionless as a statue, and draped in black, as though with a presentiment, she fixed her blank eyes on the contorted features of the dying man. Madame, whom they had hesitated to inform of what was passing, arrived when the death agony had begun; she leant over Monsieur, who showed by a motion of his head that he recognised her; after which, with a coolness which surprised me in a woman, Princess of the Blood and Palatine though she may be, she dismissed everybody except the mad woman, the Duc de Chartres, Gendron, and me; she handed me Monsieur's breviary, opened at the prayers for the dying; I read without knowing what I was reading. The Duc de Chartres had thrown himself into a chair, his face was buried in his hands; Gendron followed the least movements of the dying man's pulse; the mad woman continued to gaze upon the scene with stupid eyes, whilst Madame, having called for writing materials, dispatched a large number of letters, in which she did not, doubtless,

forget the sickness and perhaps the death of Monsieur. Until five o'clock in the morning there was no sound in the room but the hissing respiration of the dying man, the sobs of the Duc de Chartres, and the scratching of Madame's pen upon the paper.

About five o'clock, Monsieur fell into so profound a stupor, that Gendron cried involuntarily: "It is over!" This exclamation recalled poor Hébert from her reverie; she made a quick step to the window, opened it, made the sign of the cross, and threw herself out. She was picked up dead. Monsieur awoke with a start at the sound of this accident.

"My daughter!" he cried, and lost consciousness. Madame, who thought him dead, returned to finish her correspondence; we remained by Monsieur's side. He died at noon. The Duc de Chartres threw himself like a madman upon his father's body; it was necessary to employ force to remove him. As soon as Monsieur's death was known, the Chevalier de Lorraine started for one of his Abbeys, and the Duchesse de Chartres went directly to Marly, where the affliction was not great.

I repaired, in the Duc de Chartres' name, to announce to the King and Royal family that Monsieur had passed away. I met everywhere on my way with joyous faces, suppressed smiles which did not surprise me. Monsieur detested the Maintenon, and often did not conceal this aversion; in revenge, the Maintenon had damaged him in the King's opinion. I presented myself before His Majesty, who had already decided upon his attitude with regard to the death.

"I congratulate you, M. l'Abbé," he said, "on belonging to M. le Duc d'Orléans."

"Sire, I have sad tidings to communicate to you."

"I know; and I hope with all my heart that my poor brother is in Paradise."

"Sire, do not doubt it," said old Bontemps; "God thinks twice before he damns princes."

I seem to remember that the Maréchale de La Meilleraye has said something as naïvely flattering.

The King ordered me to bear the same tidings to Madame de Maintenon, who received me like the actress she was, with words of desolation; then, in the midst of her display of regret, she asked me what figure Madame was cutting.

"She is writing," I answered, thinking no harm.

"An amiable woman, passionately attached to her husband! She is shedding tears of ink! You will tell her from me, M. l'Abbé, that this death has prostrated me."

"Madame, I shall never dare . . ."

I did not finish, for I was about to say to the Maintenon that I interpreted her despair by the phrase of Madame de La Suze: "Let her beware of going to Paradise if she must find her husband there."

I next presented myself to the Grand Dauphin, who said to me phlegmatically:

"How pleased the Duc de Chartres must be!"

The Duc de Bourgogne displayed much sorrow, and made Monsieur's funeral oration in these words:

"Ulysses does not leave a Telemachus."

In passing by the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, I heard the King and the Duchesse de Bourgogne, in duet, singing an air out of an opera, of which these lines struck me:

"La mort souvent s'adresse aux plus aimables;
Mais, dans son aveugle courroux,
Elle a des traits vengeurs pour les mortels coupables,
Elle répare ainsi ses plus rigoureux coups."

I was scandalised at this conduct, and returned to Saint-Cloud to console the Duc de Chartres, and inform him of the interest taken in his misfortune.

"Dubois," he said to me, "when the Maintenon dies, I will call for flutes instead of tapers, and open the ball over her grave!"

They were words wrung from him by despair. I restored courage to him by appealing to his reason.

"You have lost the best of fathers," said I (though I did not think it), "but you are now Duc d'Orléans; you must overcome your grief, in order to prevent your enemies from robbing you of your honours."

"Let the Duchesse de Chartres act," said he; "she will profit by all the advantages of my grievous loss."

He did not deceive himself; the new Duchesse d'Orléans spared no pains to preserve for her household all the prerogatives of that of Monsieur.

I learned since that on that very day, and on the morrow of the death of the King's brother, His Majesty had set an example

of gaiety, and although they did not sing a *Te Deum*, no one at Marly was so poor a courtier as not to play and laugh and amuse himself just as ordinarily. The obsequies, however, were conducted with decency, and mourning was not forgotten. The Demoiselle Hébert was interred, I know not where, and although Monsieur had called her his daughter in a moment of delirium, we are ignorant and shall always be ignorant of her name and origin.

Louis XIV and the Maintenon would have been delighted to reduce Monsieur's inheritance to nothing; but the Duc de Chartres, having become Duc d'Orléans, according to the agreements I had obtained at the time of his marriage, had not only the immense property but also the rights, privileges, and prerogatives of his father. His household was maintained on the same scale, and without any alterations in the ranks and salaries. He did not give up his council, and was distinguished from the other Princes of the Blood by having a chancellor and keeper of the seals, a captain of guards, Swiss, gentlemen, and pages. The number of these last was augmented; and Mademoiselle de Sery, who as Comtesse d'Argenton, was more firmly established than ever, gave two pages, whom she reserved specially for her service, with her own hand to the Duc d'Orléans. Ravannes, one of the small nobility, with a pretty face, but mischievous, malicious, and libertine; Robillard, of *bourgeois* origin, mighty small and ugly, but clever and endowed with excellent qualities. He died very young, as the result of an orgy into which the diabolic Ravannes had dragged him.

The Duc d'Orléans, acting on my counsels and his own inclinations, formed a little Epicurean court which was well worth the Socratic one of Monsieur; it contained a collection of amiable minds and well-bred debauchees. Each one contributed his share of wit and good humour; the Duc d'Orléans was the god of it, and I its high-priest. The nobility, I must admit, were more in evidence than the vulgar, and almost all our initiates were gentlemen with six quarterings. I remember with delight those gallant reunions which were prolonged sometimes far into the night. The King was so much disquieted by our assemblies that he sent spies amongst us, who reassured him. He imagined that we were taking the trouble to conspire against his government; but when he realised that it was pleasure only which united

us, he did not deem it necessary to resume his dragonades against us. The Duc d'Orléans might have employed his leisure in a manner more detrimental to Louis XIV.

His Court was composed of the Marquis d'Effiat, who, by prodigies of wit, retained the position he held under Monsieur; of the Comte de Simiane, who had formed himself in the school of his wife; of the Comte de Clermont; of the Chevalier de Conflans, ever with a story on his lips; of the Abbé de Grancey, brother of the Maréchal de Médavy, and more learned in the mysteries of Venus than in those of the Church; of the Vicomte de Polignac, and the Marquis de Nesle, who were only surpassed in gallantry by their wives; finally, the Marquis de La Fare, Captain of the Guards, the most delicate of voluptuaries, formed a contrast with the Comte de Grammont, who, at the age of eighty, hid his vices as little as his wit. He had enough of the last to redeem more perverse habits than he possessed.

This Grammont, who knew how to reconcile health with pleasure and old age, had immortalised himself in France as well as in England, by a thousand impudent and roguish traits. He would have been killed a hundred times over but for his cowardice, which led him to marry Miss Hamilton. He had been on delicate terms of intimacy with her, when he escaped from London without bidding her farewell. The two brothers Hamilton, wrath at this proceeding, and desirous to marry their sister at any cost, hastened after Grammont, whom they overtook at Calais.

"Monsieur le Comte," they cried, as soon as they saw him, "have you forgotten nothing in London?"

"To be sure," he replied, "I had forgotten to marry your dear sister."

He returned incontinently, and repaired his omission. Hamilton had the stomach to be proud of this brother-in-law, who robbed at cards like a highwayman, but whose repartees and epigrams were quoted everywhere. Grammont has slain twenty reputations with a remark. He used to say: "I am not a man of temper; how comes it, pray, that the people I bite lose theirs with me?" He had never thought of believing in God, and when they talked of religion to him, he would answer: "I have never seen it in the cards." I admired him for a clever knave, and the King loved him with all his faults. It is true that since his exile, Grammont had respected the King and his mistresses. He died

as he had lived, and telling the beads of his rosary, he cried: "I have won the game from God!" The Duc d'Orléans, who was amused by him, undoubtedly despised him.

My position at the Palais-Royal was improved, and Madame, as well as the Duchesse d'Orléans, grew envious of me and were on fire to do me hurt; but it was all in vain; I bore no particular title, but I drew a yearly pension of twelve thousand livres, which I amply earned. The Prince had seen too many proofs of my talents as a *purveyor* not to utilise them. Great ladies, actresses, kept women, were no longer capable of exciting his desires; or rather he had days of *ennui*, when he had to be enlivened by adventures, and my complacency was without limits. I led him back again now to *grisettes*, for whom he acquired such a liking that he was ever ready to return to them.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLIMAX OF THE DUC D'ORLÉANS' AMOURS WITH THE
DESMARES—BARON AS APOTHECARY—THE SYRINGE AND
THE NIGHT-CAP—DUBOIS EXPELLED FROM COURT—M.
LEDRU THE IRONMONGER—HIS WIFE—HOSPITALITY,
JEALOUSY AND AVARICE—THE SIGN OF THE CROIX-DE-FER
—THE IMPRISONED HUSBAND—VIRTUE IN AN APRON—
THE HAPPY CUCKOLD—M. D'ARGENSON

DURING an absence of mine in the country, the Desmares had effected a reconciliation with the Prince, and the actress had made such skilful use of her knowledge of the world, that the Duc d'Orléans had become her treasurer and dupe. She was more than ever bewitched by Baron, who was not alone, however, in dividing her with the Prince. The former was aware of this partition; the latter refused to know of it. The Desmares had boasted at the Comédie that she was ruining a Prince of the Blood both in health and money; she had only succeeded in part, when I determined to strike a decisive blow and put an end to their intercourse.

One night at supper, the Duc d'Orléans said to me gloomily:

"Dubois, I am tired of a repose that has lasted five days; I counted on a night that should be better employed, and the Desmares has sent word to me that she is unwell."

I had been secretly informed of the causes of this indisposition.

"Monseigneur," I replied, "I will burn a taper when you are rescued from this blood-sucker, whose only aim is to see you under ground. I vow that you ought to blush to have Master Baron for your rival or rather for your colleague."

"What think you, La Fare?" said the Prince to his Captain of Guards.

"Faith, Monseigneur," replied La Fare, "Dubois is right, and so are you. Epicurus, the master of us all, advises us to take our pleasure where we find it."

"Sdeath!" cried the Prince, "the Desmares is so good to

CHAPTER XXI

209

look at, that it little recks me if Baron and a hundred more have looked on her before me."

"A good principle," said La Fare; "an old proverb is of the same opinion:

"Une femme qu'on tient
Alors vous appartient."

"None the less," I interrupted in anger, "it is shameful to see an old actor preferred to a young Prince of the Blood."

"An actor who lives at your expense in every sense, Monseigneur," added La Fare.

"And who, at this very moment," I went on, "deprives the Duc d'Orléans of a night of which he has need."

"At this moment?" said the Prince. "It is impossible; she would not have the insolence."

"I do not know what she has or has not," I replied, with animation; "but I know what I say."

A domiciliary visit to the Desmares was decided upon, under the form of a pleasure excursion; she no longer dwelt openly with Baron, but the latter spent his days and nights in the little hotel which the Duc d'Orléans had given his mistress in the *impasse* of the Opera. Supper excited our gaiety, and the Prince was not fool enough to take this sort of affair tragically. We arrived at the actress's house, and, in spite of her strict orders to be denied, we made so sudden an entry into her chamber, that we could see a man half-clad escape into the adjacent closet. The lady remained in her bed, groaning like a woman in labour. A triple outburst of laughter told her that we had perceived the fugitive.

"Well, my dear," said the Prince, with the utmost seriousness, "what is this indisposition which keeps you in bed?"

"Terrible colics," said the Desmares, in a suffering voice.

"Poor girl!" continued the Duc d'Orléans. "Why have you not sent for my physician?"

"Mademoiselle has done better," I said; "she has saved time by calling in the apothecary."

"It is true," she interrupted, imagining that I was offering her the means of avoiding a hazardous explanation; "at the noise you made at the door, the poor apothecary took flight."

"Where?" asked La Fare. "Into that closet behind that closed door?"

"Open, my friend," said the Prince through the keyhole; "no one will hurt you; continue your good offices."

At last Baron issued from his hiding-place, trembling in every limb; but as the room was only lit by one lamp, he flattered himself that he would escape without recognition.

"Come now, my dear man," said the Prince, taking his arm; "we have disturbed you at your functions, but do not put yourself out in the least."

"We will shut our eyes," said La Fare, turning his back to laugh.

"Lord!" said I, "if we are in the way here, we will wait in the next room."

"No, my friends," cried the Prince; "Desmares is not so nice as all that, and you must remain to judge of the operation; especially you, Dubois, who have apothecary's blood in your veins."

"Gentlemen," said poor Baron, "excuse me, I am incredibly clumsy before company."

"What!" cried the Prince, "do you not know that I am the Duc d'Orléans?"

"I know nothing, Monseigneur."

"Obey me, notwithstanding, and quickly; an injection for Madame, who is suffering cruelly."

During this dialogue, I had been in search of a syringe, which I charged myself, and put into Baron's hands. He hesitated, heaved a sigh, remembering, no doubt, that he had never before wielded such a sceptre; he was on the point of revealing himself, but the Prince insisted:

"I desire the operation to be performed," he said.

It was performed.

"I am dishonoured!" cried Baron, in the excess of his despair.

"I am Baron, the King of the Stage."

"You may be whom you will," said the Prince, "now that the farce is played."

The Desmares tried to carry it on.

"Baron!" she cried, "I am betrayed! What, Monsieur!" she went on with an air of tragedy, "What a horrible scandal! It will be the death of me! Tell me, what did you come here for, M. Baron?"

"For my night-cap, your baggage; you have had it these six years."

This response of Baron's was uttered with a superb pose; you might have thought you were listening to Achilles in the *Iphigénie*.

This scene, some of the most amusing features of which I have forgotten, finished with a solemn rupture between the Prince and the Desmares; in revenge, the latter lost Baron. She found the wherewithal to make up for this loss, replacing quality by quantity. The Duc d'Orléans, delighted in his secret heart to be rid of this Messalina, became all the more attached to me, in view of my genuine attachment to himself. His bounty was frequently manifested to me; a mistress could not have been better treated.

This period was by far the most laborious of my life; from morning to evening, in a thousand disguises, I was running about Paris, sampling shops and alleys, and climbing up into attics; I was seeking the wherewithal to divert the Duc d'Orléans. This adventurous kind of existence gave me faith in the wandering Jew, and the King, who, after Louvois' plan, believed the art of government to consist in espionage, having got wind of my mysterious expeditions, sought knowledge of their motive, as though one conspired with women. I was followed and watched; the result of this police measure was my exclusion from Court. Père La Chaise advised me not to appear before the King; Madame de Maintenon had heard that I had ridiculed her in a couplet, composed *inter pocula*, which had been repeated both in Paris and at Versailles. It was another motive, added to a score of others, for her hatred of me. She put no restraint upon her spite, and it was no fault of hers that I was not ignominiously dismissed from the Palais-Royal. Luckily, the Duc d'Orléans had enough distaste for her to deny her this service, even if he had possessed no liking at all for me.

From my exile from Court, I date the evil reputation which I have done my best to maintain. The fishwives of the market laid a host of adventures, some true, some false, to my account, and certain fishes were christened after me. I laughed at this celebrity. The Duc d'Orléans, as disgusted as I was with the Court of Louis XIV and his bigots, was thoroughly satisfied with my skill; I was already almost wealthy; I had all that a man of my character and temperament could desire, or rather, I desired nothing more than that my prosperity should be continued.

Amongst the beauties, facile or otherwise, whom I procured for the insatiable appetite of the Duc d'Orleans, I have not forgotten Madame Ledru, the wife of the ironmonger, nor, above all, the hardly courteous finger-marks of her Maritana. The Palais-Marchand was the centre of my expeditions; I knew every one there, down to the lap-dogs; but, in revenge, I was not known myself in person. I had abducted a score of tradeswomen, seduced a score more, and found not one cruel one among them. By turns, I made myself young or old, abbé, soldier, or cit. It was in my abbé's dress that I introduced myself into M. Ledru's hardware shop; he was the most jealous of all deceived husbands. His qualities were stamped on his hard and puckered features; his squint eyes, according to my observations, proved that his wife would not look askance at folk. The prude was capable of making one forget the faults of her husband, she resembled him so little: I admired in her the queenly carriage, the attractive plumpness, the glances which asked for alms—in short, a lovely woman. I had grown too scrupulous to think of anyone save the Prince; none the less, my flame burned to his intention.

I spoke of her to him, in terms which left the field free to his imagination; I vowed to him, moreover, that no words could ever come up to the reality. He desired to have ocular proof before passing to the last proof, and I took him to the hardware merchant, begging him to play his part carefully. I had concocted a little story, fashioned on the pattern of many others: he had adopted the pseudonym of Lucas, which had brought him good fortune in a previous intrigue; as for me, I passed under the name of the Abbé Dutrot. Ravannes had been excused from accompanying us; he was gambling in some hell.

"Good-day, M. Ledru," I said on entering, "I am bringing you one of my kinsmen, by trade an ironmonger, who wishes to start a shop."

"We have a complete stock at present, of the finest quality," said the merchant, getting ready to display his wares.

M. Lucas perceived at the end of the shop an object more dazzling than all the pots and pans, and his glances were aimed at it. Madame Ledru came forward, and said with a gentle air:

"My dear husband, don't these gentlemen require me?"

"What to do, Madame Ledru? Are you included in the stock, pray? These gentlemen have no time to gossip with females."

"Is it you, M. Dutrot," said the wife, advancing towards me, "who are bringing us custom?"

"I have two thousand pistols to spend, Madame," said the Prince, "and I am obliged to the Abbé for bringing me here."

"Two thousand pistols," cried the ironmonger, whose jealousy gave way before his avarice; "we will do business together, and I promise you will be satisfied."

"Here is a deposit of a thousand pistols, which I will ask Madame to count," said the Duc d'Orléans, giving the bag into the fair hands which he took the opportunity of squeezing.

"Wait whilst I write you out a receipt for the amount," answered the merchant, who saw only money in the transaction.

"What is the good?" said the Prince. "I believe you are an honest man, and I hope Madame Ledru will not forget me."

The lady knew too much of life to say no, and the husband gradually growing warm towards the man with the pistols invited us to supper the same evening. The Duc d'Orléans made play with his eyes as well as with his hands; Madame Ledru was delighted to have to deal with such an advantageous concern; the husband had no suspicion that he had aught to guard against.

The preparations for supper paved the way for love.

"My wife is making pancakes," said Ledru.

M. Lucas, on some thin pretext, ran into the kitchen, and the pancakes came none the quicker thereby. The table being set, the husband, whom I kept busy with my gestures and talk, did not think to look under it; wine and conversation animated the two lovers, who ventured all that it was possible to venture in presence of a jealous husband. Afterwards we fell to cards, and M. Lucas lost so liberally and gaily in favour of M. and Madame Ledru, that the latter's heart was completely won.

"To-morrow," said the Prince, "you shall have the other thousand pistols."

"And I will deliver you your purchases," replied the merchant. "But where, please, do you reside? I should like to pay you a visit."

"My address?" answered the Duc d'Orléans, making a sign

of intelligence to me as well as to Madame Ledru, who read between the lines.

"M. Lucas," I interrupted, "lives in the Rue Saint-Denis, at the sign of the Croix-de-Fer, and he asks you to supper to-morrow."

"You must accept, my dear husband," said the wife; "such politeness must be met half-way; promise me you will go."

"Certainly, I will go; and as you will not be there, God knows how many toasts we shall drink off."

"Ay, that you will," said I.

The separation was pathetic; M. Lucas obtained permission of the husband to embrace his wife, and the kiss was as good as ten. Madame Ledru made signs of consenting to anything for the following night. The Duc d'Orléans left her in such a state of disorder that the jealous husband very nearly perceived it.

"What is the matter with you, gossip?" quoth he.

"I have supped too well," she answered, withdrawing from his observation.

"Go to bed," said Madame Ledru to her spouse; "to-morrow you will go and inquire after these gentlemen."

I had given M. Lucas' address so casually to the ironmonger that I feared he might forget it; however, I made all my preparations. I hired the whole of the Croix-de-Fer for that day, and cleared it of travellers and servants. I had called in the services of Ravannes who was to play a passive rôle in the matter. I chose a sort of little cellar which seemed to me suited for my purpose. After having given my instructions to the page in the Prince's interest, I started dicing with him, while waiting for our man. It seems that the night, which brings counsel with it, had inspired the ironmonger with suspicion; he distrusted M. Lucas' rendezvous, and would not have kept it, had not his wife urged him to it, on grounds of business and honour.

I saw him in the distance from the window, and had time to descend; he met me on the stairs.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To the cellar," I replied. "M. Lucas has some choice wines which he wishes to dispose of; I beg you to come and taste them."

"M. Dutrot," said the old miser; "when our business is concluded, try and induce our friend to give my wife a sample of this wine."

"Do not trouble; M. Lucas is as generous as a prince."

We had reached the cellar by this time.

"Where is M. Lucas?" asked the merchant, stopping short.

"He is upstairs; where do you expect him to be? Not in this cellar, surely?"

I continued to advance, and, drawing close to the wall, blew out my candle at the very moment when M. Ledru passed the fatal threshold. I shut the door and drew the bolts. "What a singular joke of yours!" he said aloud, and I burst out laughing; and as soon as he began to beat and kick against the prison-door, I went to rejoin Ravannes who had orders to mount guard until I came to relieve him.

Night was falling when I returned to the Palais-Royal, where the Duc d'Orléans was impatiently awaiting me; we were soon on our way. I told him, as we went, of the husband's incarceration and the Prince was mightily amused at it. The fair tin-merchant did not expect to see both of us arrive; however, to be prepared for any event she had kept her servant wench, which seemed to me a delicate attention. It was no season for spinning out preliminaries, and M. Lucas entered the husband's bedroom without ceremony, whilst I mounted guard outside the door, at the side of the piece of virtue in the apron. M. Lucas gave the tin-merchant such a prodigious long séance that I had to devise a means of passing the time. I behaved towards the servant with all a rake's boldness, but they were too busy to hear her, when her virtue turned to fury and I had near lost my two eyes, or worse still. The struggle was maintained without a break, until there was a knock at the door.

"Open for the love of God," cried a voice which I recognised as that of Ravannes. I let him in immediately. "He has escaped," he cried, gasping for breath. "The neighbours ran in at his cries, and he is on my track."

I guessed that he was speaking of the imprisoned husband. The latter flung himself through the door which had been left open; he took the precaution to shut and double lock it, whilst I ran to warn the Duc d'Orléans, leaving the servant, the husband, and Ravannes in the ante-chamber. M. Lucas, greatly moved at this surprise, drew his sword without reflecting on the compromising state of his toilette. The husband burst in, his face all bleeding at the hands of his chaste servant, who had taken him for me.

"Madame!" he cried, at the sight of his Lucretia, who seized M. Lucas abruptly by the throat.

"Villain!" she said, "do you not know a virtuous woman? If M. Ledru had not arrived so seasonably he would have . . ."

"'Tis the same with me," bawled the pugnacious soubrette.

"I had nigh been raped by this rogue of an abbé."

"Shout as much as you like, girls and women," cried Ravannes louder than them all; "but don't throttle folk. The first one who stirs I will kill."

A naked sword blade is a powerful argument. Madame Ledru let go of the Duc d'Orléans, who was half choked; M. Ledru beat his forehead, and the wench looked at herself in the glass. The Prince had just caught sight of my face, which was no less scratched than the husband's. We looked like two cocks who had been fighting; he burst into laughter, it infected all the company, even M. Ledru, who said with a sigh:

"Luckily I have arrived in time, my dear wife; it is not the fault of this rogue of an abbé who had shut me up in a cellar."

"I have had a fine escape!" said the wife, casting down her eyes.

"And how about me?" added the husband.

"And me," put in the Duc d'Orléans, rubbing his throat.

"And me," said I, feeling my bruised eyes.

"And me," echoed the servant, arranging her dress.

The Prince had recovered from his emotion; he asked for a glass of water, which the husband brought him humbly. He had seen the Orléans arms on the hilt of the Prince's sword.

"My friend," said the latter, rising to take his leave; "I do not thank you for the hospitality I have received in your house; I ask your pardon for the imprisonment you have undergone in the hostelry of Monsieur Lucas. . . ."

"Monseigneur," said the ironmonger, "I beg you to forget."

"I make you the same request; but keep my deposit, to recompense you for the scandal I have caused."

"Farewell, idiot," added Ravannes.

"Madame," resumed the Duc d'Orléans nobly, "I admire your virtue even more than your charms; I am their servitor."

The poor merchant, quite nonplussed, took the candle to escort us out ceremoniously.

"Ledru," said I, as a farewell speech; "remember that a pretty woman is a dangerous beast."

This adventure, which finished as ill as it began well, persuaded the Duc d'Orléans to leave *grisettes* alone for a little. He had issued safe and sound, however, from the hands of the lady, who had given proof of admirable presence of mind; but this very impudence destroyed all the charm; at another time, perhaps, it would have seemed piquant to him. The reign of *grisettes* was over, and his imagination was tasked to replace them. "Dubois," he said to me one day, "you have spoken to me of facile but no less keen pleasures, and I am tempted to try them; I am sure that my heart at least will run no danger."

My objections were overruled by the Prince's will; all that I could obtain from him was that he would inform M. d'Argenson, the Lieutenant of Police, whenever he wished to betake himself into suspicious haunts. The Duc d'Orléans was so impetuous in his desires that he would brook no delay. He commanded me to go as ambassador extraordinary to M. Levoyer d'Argenson.

This lieutenant of police, who was more able even than La Reynie, knew the Court and the town by heart; he maintained intimate relations with many great nobles, who paid him well; every day he was received in private audience by Madame de Maintenon; this was how she was so promptly informed of all that was passing. On the other hand, M. d'Argenson used to write to Madame, who thus swelled the budget of her correspondence. This sort of espionage was highly profitable, and the King, by nature curious, loved to have all the events of Paris related to him in detail. Since then, the Duc d'Orléans and I have pensioned d'Argenson, who rewarded us with services and confidences. He had so many eyes and ears at his command, that nothing remained unknown to him; he penetrated into families, and the Court was not beyond the reach of his jurisdiction; a time came when he informed me of every pretty girl who entered Paris. D'Argenson's heart was more humane than his face; he was an ugly likeness, in all save horns, of the devils that are represented in church pictures. His eyes sparkled with intelligence, but his mouth was so disproportionately large, his thick eyebrows were set in so terrible a frown, that one could not see him without fear. He was the terror of thieves, and Saint-Simon called him the Minos of the police.

With this hideous appearance, there was goodness in his soul; from caprice he would often push severity to excess, and carry indulgence to the point of weakness. Above all, he loved money, and hoarded it, seeing that last year they found in a cupboard in his closet at the ministry a sum in gold, with a label, which I have preserved, bearing these words, written with his own hand: "*Honour is good, but money is better.*" This avarice was due to his having been poor, when he was still only lieutenant-general of Angoulême. I have been poor, too, but if I love money, it is in order to employ it for my pleasures. Since then, I have had bonds of friendship and interest with d'Argenson, and I found the inward man amiable, jovial, and a free liver.

I had my name announced, coupled with that of the Duc d'Orléans, and he received me with the effusion of a friend of fifteen years standing.

"It is you, my dear Dubois," said he; "you think you see me for the first time; but I have met you in worse company."

"It is enough that you were in it, Monsieur, to change its reputation. Lord knows whither your office may not take you, with all the innocence in the world!"

This exordium led me suddenly to broach the motive of my visit; M. d'Argenson, without appearing astonished at the trivial tastes of the Duc d'Orléans, answered, with an air of zeal, that he would watch over the Prince everywhere, provided that he were forewarned in the morning. "I should long since have proposed to his Royal Highness," said he, "to protect his amusements, if I had not feared to cross him by seeming initiated in his conduct. But the sons of His Majesty have also had their hour, and several are still as wild as ever. For instance, last week, if I had received orders, I would have arrested your ironmonger of the Palais. As for you, M. Dubois, who may be almost said to hold the post of a lieutenant of the police of amours, count at all times on my desire to be of use to you."

The Duc d'Orléans could penetrate without fear into the most ill-famed places; he sent word to M. d'Argenson, in the morning, as to the quarter in which he would spend his evening, and a detachment of spies kept watch round the house at the hour fixed. The Prince never went alone; I had made myself his indispensable squire in this kind of adventure; we usually chose a third culprit from amongst the pages or the friends of the

Palais-Royal. We sometimes led away the Comte de Simiane, who plumed himself on baulking his wife of that which she recovered elsewhere with usury.

Amongst many adventures, which smell too strongly of the places where they occurred, to be written down, there was one well calculated to disgust the Prince with the damsels he had preferred to the *grisettes*. One evening, the Duc d'Orléans was seized with so sudden a desire to make an excursion to the house of the Cambray, that the lieutenant of police was not forewarned. Ravannes and I were of the party; the Cambray, who was young enough to have no need to exploit the youth of others, gave us an honourable reception, during which the profane were excluded. The door was not shut securely enough to resist three officers in whom wine had excited tender inclinations. They became irritated at the refusal they met with, in spite of us, and especially at the privilege we had secured of sending the public hungry away. They burst in the doors and forced themselves into our presence, who were but ill prepared to meet an assault of this nature. They had drawn their swords, and the Duc d'Orléans had barely the time to present the point of his own to them. "Let us kill these three rascals," they cried, lunging at the Prince and Ravannes, who kept them at bay, in spite of the disadvantage of numbers and of being on the defensive; one of them noticing the disorder of fear in me, as well as that of dress, put himself in position to attack the defenceless part of me; the Prince brought him to the ground with a thrust in his left breast. Then there was a concert of screaming women. "Wretches," cried the Prince, "you deserve a greater chastisement for your cowardice." The officers lowered their swords, while they looked at their comrade's wound. "Let a surgeon be sent for," continued the Prince. "Gentlemen, I do not think you will talk of our encounter, which does not redound to your honour. I am the Duc d'Orléans."

CHAPTER XXII

AXIOM OF LOUIS XIV—PÈRE DE LA RUE—DUBOIS' INTRIGUE—
 MADEMOISELLE D'ORLÉANS — HER PORTRAIT — HER VICES
 AND EDUCATION—THE DUC DE BERRI—HIS PHYSICAL AND
 MORAL PORTRAIT — MADAME DE SAINT-SIMON — THE
 CHAMBER-MAID OF M. DE BERRI—CONFIDENCE TO THE
 DUC D'ORLÉANS — THE MARRIAGE—ITS CONSEQUENCES —
 DUBOIS MEETS HIS WIFE

LOUIS XIV had said in presence of the Maintenon: "I do not wish my grandchildren to have mistresses; it is prejudicial to their health and their religion." These words of the great King announced to Europe that the Duc de Berri was ripe for marriage. I should find it hard to believe that he had not already disobeyed his grandfather on the article of mistresses, for there are always venal women in the vicinity of princes, and the Duc de Berri, however pious he might be, would not have waited till the age of twenty-four to investigate the matter; however, he married a Princess more precocious than himself.

Madame d'Orléans was desirous that her eldest daughter should marry the Duc de Berri, and the two favourites opposed her pretensions, for fear lest the Duc d'Orléans should reap some advantage from this marriage. They were still far, however, from thinking of the Regency. Madame la Duchesse, who, under these circumstances, offered her daughter to the young Prince, had every chance of seeing her accepted. It required a Jesuit and Dubois to frustrate these fine projects.

There is no one so fit as a Confessor to manage an affair successfully. The Confessor of the Duc de Berri was Père de La Rue, a Jesuit, I believe, in his mother's womb. This La Rue, who is still alive and prospering, has always been a man of two faces, of a reddish complexion, honeyed speech, and circuitous conduct. I have never liked him, because I knew him too well, and whoever judged him from his false and hypocritical exterior would have run no risk of being deceived in him. It is for this reason I once said that for so skilful a deceiver his face

was hardly suitable. To see his little oblong head set deeply between his two shoulders, his nervous movements, his large hands and enormous feet, one would not have suspected him of as much wit as he possessed. The great Corneille estimated his talents so highly as to translate his Latin verses into French.

"There is genius beneath that robe," said he.

By that may be understood, perhaps, the genius of evil.

Indeed, the Père La Rue went to convert the Calvinists in the Cevennes, with the eloquence of fire and sword. In the towns he "performed" sermons, to use his own theatrical expression; his finest mission was that of Montauban, where he drove out three devils by the imposition of hands. I have a notion that these devils were of the female sex, in spite of the Jesuit antipathy. Oh! what an artful robber of inheritance he was! By this means he amassed the huge fortune which enabled him to build the house of the Society of Jesus at Pontoise. The legitimate heirs started several suits against him, but they were never brought to a conclusion for the honour of the order. He engulfed the immense property of Madame Colin, widow of a farmer-general. The testament, which made him universal legatee, was attacked by Mademoiselle Charon, a kinswoman of the deceased; they had to have recourse to strong measures to prevent a terrible scandal; and Mademoiselle Charon, imprisoned without any form of trial, was constrained to silence. Père La Rue composed a treatise upon hypocrisy, in which he painted himself after nature. He believed all things permitted him, because he permitted all things to himself; his mind followed the devious ways of his character. There was nothing he would not do to earn money, and he spent much of it in gaming, when women and good fare left him any to spend. He was outwardly of the order of Saint-Francis; at least he boasted of it. I know no more powerful preacher than he, before his voice failed him. Baron, who would have been as fine in the pulpit, as he was grotesque on the stage, made a labour of love of forming this knave La Rue, who paid him for his lessons with his friendship, his dinners, and his hardly Jesuitical comedies. I have often seen La Rue behind the grating of a box at the Opera and at the Comédie, and he said to the King, who reproached him with this scandal, that he went there to study his profession of preacher. This excuse suggests a criticism of the actors' declara-

tion. But La Rue preferred the actresses to these last; they did not treat him as a Jesuit. It was thus that the nature of our common acquaintances had brought us into relations; when we met, each of us might have said that it was in mighty bad company. I leave you to imagine in what place we met most frequently.

"We are good friends," I said to him one day, "and it is our interest to be so. To tighten our bonds, would you like the hand of one of my Princesses for your Prince?"

"Willingly, on condition that you pay me in ready money for the superior honour I do you."

"You drive a bargain to-day?"

"As every day; nothing can be had for nothing."

"I promise you in the Duc d'Orléans' name, a gratification of a hundred thousand livres, and you are to rid us of Mademoiselle."

"Help me, on your side, and we shall attain our end, in spite of Madame la Duchesse, who has not deigned to have recourse to my services."

"The negotiation on which we are embarking is difficult; the Maintenon cabal is opposed to this marriage."

"Never mind; Père Le Tellier will not be more cunning than the late Père La Chaise."

"In the first place, you will have odious slanders to refute. . . ."

"To refute them is to appear to attach credit to them. I know that quite recently there has been open talk of a portrait of Mademoiselle painted by her father, who did not think of draping his model."

"He imagined he was working from the antique, and the artist took the place of the father."

"To conclude, I will interest the Society in my project, and the ceremony will take place in a month's time or never."

I had not waited for the Duc d'Orléans' permission to set about marrying his daughter, who was not so innocent as her age might have led one to believe. I had in her a dangerous rival, whose influence over the Prince—an influence which grew with the growth of the Princess—I had to combat. This marriage, in its kind, was a combination no less profound than the alliance of 1717. I hoped by it to remain alone in the good graces of the Duc d'Orléans, who often neglected me

for his dear daughter. Finally, I was acting in the interest of my master, who, by his abandoned conduct, gave only too much handle to his enemies. A Prince of the Blood ought to attach more importance than an abbé to his reputation. There are also certain things which one can not endure with indifference; criminals who see their own image everywhere, had dared to accuse the Prince of a criminal love for his daughter. This atrocity has been perpetuated since the death of the latter, and it is unfortunate that the Regent never did anything to justify himself against such a terrible accusation. On the contrary, the affection he bore his daughter found vent in such follies and extravagances, as were very liable to give credibility to a situation which did not and could not exist. I have often reproached him with his lightness in this matter; he has answered me, laughing, that it was as impossible to shut the mouths of the malicious as to give venom to a sheep. In fine, by employing my authority to promote the union of Mademoiselle, with a grandson of the King, I hoped to put an end to the audacity of the agents of the Maintenon; 'tis charity, I thoroughly believe, to serve others' interests at the same time as your own. I wash my hands of what happened.

Madame said, not without an after-thought, "Monsieur loves his eldest daughter more than all his other children." Mademoiselle deserved this preference in more than one respect. I speak of her here with all the more impartiality, because she hated me with the utmost frankness. Contrary to my habit of paying my friends and my enemies in like coin, I did not reciprocate this feeling. She resembled her father so perfectly that she reminded me of Mademoiselle Charlotte at the Carmelites. It would have been more incredible if he had not loved her. Their resemblance was not only in features; they had the same wit, the same faults. Beyond these causes of sympathy, one is quoted which is rooted directly in paternal love. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, as my friend Stanhope used to say. Mademoiselle, at the age of seven years, had a grave illness, and the physicians could discover no remedy for the wasting disease which consumed her; they had even given her up for lost, when the Prince interfered to save her, although he had not been received as a doctor by the faculty. The study he had made of simples came to his aid, and his daughter

owed her life to him a second time. Hence that mutual tenderness which has furnished texts for the scandalous chronicles; hence the suspicions of magic which the Prince incurred; they made a crime out of this marvellous cure.

Mademoiselle was tall before excesses had spoiled her figure; beautiful until her skin was marked with red spots. She retained her wit and her caprices even in her last illness. Her mind, which was not distinguished by the best of taste, from lack of proper education, was manifested in a thousand forms, with a quaintness of speech, a grace of seduction which fascinated the least gallant. At an early age she had trodden under foot all that strong minds call prejudices, and her liberty ever degenerated into licence. Her eyes were no more restrained than her person, and gave credibility to all the libertine adventures that were attributed to her. She was little concerned at the publicity of her debauches, provided that she was not prevented in them. Pleasure was the only god in whom she cared to believe. Choleric and laughter-loving, naïve yet false, selfish and sensitive, she was a mosaic of vices and good qualities. In short, she was adorable, and was adored, and I would fain have burned a few grains of incense on her altar; but my grey beard alarmed her, and she had christened me *Milord*, because of my journeys to England; moreover, she treated me rather less well than a dog one loads with blows.

I paint her such as she was when a month of married life had developed her; for previously, Madame d'Orléans, who had her eye on the Duc de Berri for her, recommended her brutally to play the *Sainte-Nitouche*. Mademoiselle had been brought up very ill by chamber-maids; she sang aloud as she walked, stumbled at every step, ran, jumped, and flung herself on the ground; she might have been a boy in petticoats. Her lack of manners diverted her father, who spent hours in watching her eat till she choked, and in cutting capers like a mountebank. She danced with an ignoble air, or rather did not dance at all; she knew music, and sang correctly, if not agreeably. Later on, her voice became harsh; she was well read only in the gayest form of romances. Such was the fine education she had received at Paris and Saint-Cloud; they would have, assuredly, done better to confide her at all risks to me. But when Madame d'Orléans had taken her to Versailles to put a bridle on this piece of unruly

youth, she adorned her in a decency and virtue which imposed on the most piercing gaze. She was almost in an odour of sanctity when I undertook the task of marrying her.

The Duc de Berri was not a hunchback, because he had never carried an iron bar like his brother the Duc de Bourgogne. They said he was handsome, since a prince finds a thousand flatterers to give him this appellation, if he be not too decidedly ugly. This Prince, with his small, squat figure, his coarse obesity, his florid cheeks and straw-coloured hair, had the look and carriage of a servant. Madame de Maintenon, in concert with the Dauphine, neglected his education to such a degree that they hardly taught him to read and write. She took pleasure in humiliating his birth by the servitude in which he grovelled. A lackey could not have been worse treated. The worst was that the valets, seeing the lack of consideration shown him, thought themselves authorised to act likewise. The ladies of the Dauphine, with whom he was thrown night and day, addressed him as familiarly as if he had been a slave bought in the market: "Berri," they said to him, "come here; shut the door; bring the table nearer; fetch me my work, my scissors"; and Berri humbly obeyed.

Another would not have issued safe and sound from the hands of these virtues, but the poor Prince had piety enough to withstand all these young ladies. As for wits, I am assured he had his share as a child; there was a host of pretty sayings of his quoted at the time; but he became stupid as he grew up, either that superstitious practices and his piety had narrowed his mind, or for some other reason. Madame said phlegmatically that he shared the fate of Parisian children, who show great intelligence in their youth, and become stupid subsequently. It is possible again that his stupidity was due to the fear he had of the King; I have seen him shut his eyes when His Majesty passed, and answer his questions with a stammer like a drunken man. For the rest, he avenged himself on his inferiors for the respect and repression imposed on him with Madame de Maintenon; he tortured his little world without pity. M. de Saint-Simon, who flattered himself that sooner or later he would see him ascend the throne, had obtained his confidence and followed him like his shadow.

It was to the latter I addressed myself in order to hurry on the marriage which I had more at heart than the future pair.

M. de Saint-Simon received me with the haughtiness of his nobility, and yet with the consideration due to my position in the household of the Duc d'Orléans.

"M. le Duc," said I, "you would do us a great favour by condescending to busy yourself, however little, with this affair."

"Monsieur," he replied, "I shall wait until His Royal Highness has given me the order to treat with M. de Berri."

"Not so; the Duc d'Orléans, for reasons known to himself, wishes to remain neutral in this negotiation; but he promises you a place as lady of honour for Madame la Duchesse de Saint-Simon with the new Duchess."

"Are we to see you, M. Dubois, thrust into some new office?"

"No, Monsieur, the Prince's bounty renders all solicitation unnecessary to me; he has protected me as though I were a man of quality."

"Well, I see nothing improper in this alliance, and I will repeat my opinion to M. le Duc. It is good to have the right of free speech with princes. It is a condition of my rank and nobility."

I left this proud lord very well disposed to our projects, thanks to the lady of honour whom I had nominated on my own account. I wasted neither my time nor my measures; I went to Madame escorted by Massillon, whom I had taken into my confidence. I had a difficult part to play with this woman, the most adroit of the Court and the most hostile to me.

"Madame," I said, without any preliminary, "I am here to cast myself at the feet of your prudence, in the interests of your Royal family."

"What is it?" she asked; "Dubois, you have too concerned an air to be as disinterested as you pretend."

"M. Massillon," said I, "is a guarantee of the rectitude of my intentions; it concerns the marriage of Mademoiselle with H.R.H. the Duc de Berri."

"It is too great an honour for that little clown, crusted over as he is with rusticity."

"Madame," said Massillon, "it will put a stop to rumours most insulting to Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans. . . ."

"I know," she interrupted with a laugh; "I have written all that in my budget; the old harridan is seeking to whiten herself by blackening others. . . ."

"Better still, Madame," I added, "she has sworn by all her gods that Monsieur de Berri shall marry the daughter of Madame la Duchesse."

"I swear by the shade of Scarron, as the ancients swore by the water of Styx, that the said marriage shall take place; not that I hold to it particularly, for the smallest Elector Palatine is worth a hundred of this unlicked cub; but we shall see whether the old harridan or I will be worsted."

"Yes," said I, in my turn, "it is worthy of you, Madame, to humiliate the Maintenon, to satisfy Monseigneur d'Orléans, and to make two persons happy."

"If I must confess to you, Abbé," she retorted, "I do not believe in the two happy persons; my informants told me yesterday that the little Berri was keeping a chambermaid, who is ugly, sallow, and black."

"Perhaps she is not a chambermaid," observed Massillon, innocently.

"Indeed she is," retorted Madame, "and he is passionately in love with her; there are true lackey's tastes for you!"

Madame, who was always in costume of ceremony, went to see the King, to arrange the marriage which I had done more to advance than Madame d'Orléans herself. The Duc had not heard a word of it, and it was not my least difficult task to make him see reason.

"What, rascal," he cried, at the first word I broached on the matter, "by what right do you meddle in my affairs?"

"The right of necessity, Monseigneur."

"Rogue! Mademoiselle has no need of your interference to obtain a husband worthy of her. . . ."

"Faith, are you not there to provide her with one when she needs it?"

"A truce to your jests; they are not in season now."

"Let us speak with perfect frankness then, Monseigneur; Madame, Madame d'Orléans, M. de Saint-Simon, and a host of people who are your friends, have negotiated this marriage. . . ."

"No matter if the devil had a hand in it; it shall not take place."

"It is fine, it is great to be above the reach of calumny, Monseigneur. . . ."

"Stop, unhappy man, I will have your tongue cut out if you

repeat those iniquities ! . . . To be sure, Dubois, this alliance is advantageous for my daughter and for me ; again, I must marry her sooner or later. . . . But, truly, I am mighty fond of the child."

Two or three interviews conducted on this plan completed the Prince's conversion. As for the King, he heeded only reasons of State, and, giving Madame the victory over the Maintenon, consented to the marriage, which satisfied no one's hopes, not even my own. Père La Rue, who had sweated blood and water to compel the Duc de Berri to marry any woman except his chambermaid, obtained only an abbey, instead of the hundred thousand livres I had promised him ; he revenged himself on me ; Madame de Saint-Simon was appointed lady of honour to the Duchesse de Berri, but her husband had not the high authority which he hoped for in the Prince's household ; finally, for myself, whilst I was congratulating myself on reigning supreme at the Palais-Royal, I saw with sorrow that Madame de Berri had not renounced the empire she exercised over her father. The Duc d'Orléans reproached me with having urged her to this marriage ; the bride bore me no less of a grudge ; Madame d'Orléans said everywhere that I had sacrificed her daughter ; Madame thought I had been paid by one, or, perhaps, by both parties to the negotiation ; there was no one, not even Massillon, who did not repent having had a hand in my intrigue.

The husband and wife both alike cursed the position in which they found themselves ; the ceremonies of the wedding were very brilliant ; but the first night discord was introduced into the nuptial bed. By the next morning the bride had gained in haughtiness and boldness as much as the poor bridegroom in dulness and timidity. From henceforth, the little Duchess began to flout and thwart him in the smallest matter without any restraint or thought of what was befitting. She made a jest of him on every occasion, and exhibited him as a learned animal. The Duc de Berri took refuge in his dull bigotry, and was not safe from her ill-nature ; she forced him to break his fasts and eat meat on Fridays, to stay away from Mass, and was prouder of this than if she had gained indulgences. She went so far as to endeavour to sow discord between her husband and the Duc de Bourgogne, in her hatred of the Duchess ; but the two brothers remained as united as before her good offices. The Duc de

Berri thanked the good God when he had obtained a separate chamber. He consoled himself, moreover, in all honour with his chambermaid, who captivated him until his death. This creature had no other charm than her perseverance. One day the Duchesse de Berri surprised them amidst their intimate confidences ; instead of appearing indignant, she burst into a great fit of laughing, making the sign of the cross ; her good spouse did not budge, no more did his mistress.

"Monsieur," said his wife, "change nothing in your manner of life ; we will continue to live amicably, provided that you leave me on my side to do as I please ; otherwise I will tell the King everything, and your Sultana will not even be buried in consecrated ground."

The threat brought about a mutual agreement ; the chambermaid was not separated from her Prince of the Blood, and Madame de Berri recouped herself a hundredfold for her husband's infidelities. I could tell fine stories ; I shall be careful not to say all I know of her.

Whilst I was so hotly engaged with the marriage of another, my own was recalled to me in a manner sufficiently disagreeable. I thought no more of my wife than if I had never had one ; the rascal took it into her head to think of me. One morning when I was working with the Prince at the Palais-Royal more seriously than usual, His Royal Highness, grieved at the separation from his daughter, gave vent aloud to equivocal reflections :

"Alas ! Dubois," said he, "how far better to be celibate ! I know nothing sadder than marriage."

"I agree with you, Monseigneur," I answered absently, "and when one has committed the folly, the only remedy is to say to one's chaste spouse : '*Bonsoir, ma mie !*' I am delighted, for my part, with the expedient."

"Plague !" cried the Prince, "are you one of the great confraternity, M. l'Abbé ?"

"Lord ! Monseigneur, it is not worth mentioning."

Suddenly an unusual noise was heard in the ante-chambers ; the Duc d'Orléans, faithful to a schoolboy fault of his, put his ear to the door to discover what was the matter. I did not withstand his bad example ; the servants were disputing keenly amongst themselves, and a shrill woman's voice made me tremble.

"Certainly, I shall go in," she said; "I will see my husband."

"Her husband!" echoed the Prince, looking at me; I grew pale and said not a word.

"Yes, rogues that you are," she went on, "I am not mad nor drunk; it is the Abbé Dubois who is my husband."

"You!" cried His Highness.

"It seems so, Monseigneur; I must have got married without noticing it."

"Let her come in," said the Prince, opening the door, which he closed behind my genuine wife, who had grown passably plain in the thirty-five years since I had left her, or, rather, she had left me; yet she was a beauty for her age, and I understood when I saw more ravages on her face than in her toilette, that she had lived by her own industry before having recourse to mine.

"Do you mean to say you dare show your face before me, slut?" said I.

"Certainly," she answered with effrontery; "a husband owes his wife a maintenance."

"Perhaps you will have the face to ask it for your children also?"

"No, I have pity on your purse; but in short, my dear Abbé, you ought to be grateful to me for taking so long to come; I waited until my resources were exhausted before applying for a little share of your great fortune."

"A place at the Carmelites you would say."

"Ungrateful man! for thirty-five years I have been able to support myself, and you refuse to help me now you are a millionaire."

"I should soon cease to be one, if all the likes of you came to live at my expense."

"Listen, Dubois," said the Duc d'Orléans, "be generous for once in this life; it will bring you happiness in the next."

"Much obliged, Monseigneur; but what can be done for this baggage?"

"Not much," he answered, with a laugh.

"Let us sign an agreement," I said to Pierrette; "in return for a pension of six hundred livres which I will make you like a good husband. . . ."

"I must have twelve hundred livres, or I will promise nothing," she answered.

"M. l'Abbé consents," interrupted the Prince.

"This old jade sells her silence dear," cried I; "however, I agree to the twelve hundred livres, but on condition that she forgets our marriage. . . ."

"I should have never remembered it," she replied, "but for the embarrassment in which I found myself."

"Yes," I continued; "but you will never speak of it, no matter to whom."

"What! do you think me such a fool as to wish to injure myself?"

"Well, let it be a bargain then, my pretty one, and I will be the Abbé Dubois as before."

"Until the end of the ages, if it is your good pleasure."

We were sufficiently bound by our mutual interests to be able to dispense with a double bond; Pierrette, during the time of our separation, had fully exhausted her youth and beauty; our arrangement once concluded, we met without anger. The Duc d'Orléans, put in a good humour by this rencontre, interrupted the volleys of questions we hurled at one another. He wanted Pierrette to relate to him in detail the adventures of a life which had been occupied day and night, and I vow that her recital surpassed anything I could imagine. I confess that the Abbé Dubois consoled himself for all at the husband's expense. Finally, the Prince rewarded her for the pleasure she had given us, at little cost to herself, and since that day she has been as punctual in calling every quarter for her pension as we have been in paying it. That has been the limit of our conjugal relations.

CHAPTER XXIII

DEATH OF M. LE PRINCE, M. LE DUC, AND THE PRINCE DE CONTI—PROPHECY OF NOSTRADAMUS—PÈRE LE TELLIER, THE KING'S CONFESSOR—SMALL-POX—DEATH OF MONSEIGNEUR—SICKNESS AND DEATH OF THE DAUPHINE AND DAUPHIN—THE AUTOPSY—CALUMNIES AGAINST THE DUC D'ORLÉANS—THE ACCUSATION OF PÈRE ARNOUX—THE DUC D'ORLÉANS INSULTED BY THE PEOPLE—HIS JUSTIFICATION TO THE KING—MADAME DE VERRUE—THE ANTIDOTE—CONFRONTATION WITH THE DUC DU MAINE

It would seem as though death were interfering in the interest of the Duc d'Orléans; his enemies were the first to die, and then Louis XIV saw his children and grand-children successively disappear. In 1709, M. le Prince succumbed to a lingering malady which degenerated into insanity. He began by weighing in his hands all that entered his body and then all that issued from it. Having discovered that the weight was not exactly the same in the two operations, he deemed himself a dead man, in spite of the doctors who exerted themselves to prove the contrary; he moreover took the fantasy to confess every day. His reason returned to him a moment before he passed away, and he said to the persons surrounding his bed:

"Good-bye, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I am departing to return no more; of all that I leave on earth I regret only Chantilly!"

The same year the Prince de Conti brought his worries and his debauches to the saddest possible termination; in his last moments he desired to get drunk, in order that he might pass from life to death without thinking of it, but his confessor commanded him to refrain out of penitence. In 1710, M. le Duc rejoined his father with like suddenness; he had some of the blood of the Condés in his veins, for on his deathbed he composed a rollicking song which he sang as a sort of *De Profundis*. We were but slightly affected at these three deaths, and the

CHAPTER XXIII

233

Court, like ourselves, hardly noticed them; these three Princes, since the Italian and Spanish campaigns, had mixed themselves in the cabal which had so much annoyed the Duc d'Orléans. If the dead have any concern in this lower world, they certainly inspired the horrible calumnies which were shortly to pursue him.

One day, when His Highness was possessed by strange thoughts and presentiments, I was turning the leaves of a volume of Nostradamus, his prophecies, with an indifferent air. I had never put any faith in astrologers or their jargon, but I have often met with singular coincidences; I can easily concede that a feeble mind may surrender to these false proofs of a ridiculous art. I was brought up in my perusal by one of these remarkable resemblances; I uttered an exclamation which roused the Prince from his reverie.

"What is it, Abbé? Is it your wife again?"

"Listen, Monseigneur," said I, without replying to this pleasantry, "here is something which concerns you, imagine that I am wearing the diviner's ring:

"Quand par Ormus viendront gens de passage,
En l'autre obscur ira le vieux lion,
Sera de l'Orléans fait grand usage,
Et d'ici, bâtard, ta punition." *

"Dubois," he asked, with a shudder, "is that written?"

"See; century 145. I do not know if I understand the language of prophecy, but in this quatrain I see distinctly the death of Louis XIV, the regency, or, perhaps, the reign of the Duc d'Orléans, and the disappointment of the legitimatised bastards."

"Indeed, you only have to explain *Ormus* as France, to make the sense complete; as to the *gens de passage*, go and see if they are come!"

"Incredulous as you are, reflect that the possible approaches the impossible; I swear to you, Monseigneur, it is not the first time I have thought of the high destiny which awaits you after the King's death."

* When through Ormus shall come the folk of passage,
The old lion shall go to the obscure cave,
Great use shall be made of the Orléans,
Whence, bastard, comes thy chastisement.

"That of premier Prince of the Blood, that is all."

"You forget that already M. le Prince, M. le Duc, and the Prince de Conti are dead!"

"Already—you make me tremble."

"See now how many lives stand between you and the Crown."

"Dubois, you might be overheard, and the Maintenon would be the woman to poison somebody to work my ruin!"

"I think you would be the first one poisoned; but, between ourselves, Monseigneur is fifty years old; the Duc de Bourgogne is in weak health; the King of Spain is not a rival to be feared; the Duc de Berri is your son-in-law, the two sons of the Duc de Bourgogne are very young; as for the bastard princes, they will never come to the throne in spite of the History of France of Père Daniel, who wants to revive royal bastardy."

"My dear Dubois, one may think all that, but it is imprudent to say it."

"No, Monseigneur, in the Palais-Royal, the walls have not ears and eyes as in the palace of Nero, and castles in the air are not crimes of state."

"I beg you to say no more about these mad ideas; no one has a right to dispose of the future. I recommend you to keep silence as to this interview; it might receive a bad interpretation."

By an incredible chance, which could only have been brought about by the Maintenon and the Duc du Maine, the *Century* of Nostradamus was right against all the probabilities; the event fulfilled our hopes, and what happened was so skilfully perverted by the Duc d'Orléans' enemies that he was nigh being crushed beneath the weight of accusations. Père Le Tellier, Confessor of the King after the death of Père La Chaise, was the ostensible author of this iniquity.

This Père Le Tellier was the *âme damnée* of the Maintenon, so skilled in winning over the King's confessors; there was an interchange of good services between them. Le Tellier completed the ruin of the Duc d'Orléans in the King's opinion, who saw only through the eyes of his confessors and mistresses; chance, or, perhaps, poison, came to the aid of the blackest perfidy ever imagined. The dreadful conspiracy had no less an aim than to bring a Prince of the Blood to the scaffold.

Monseigneur, on rising from table, went to the chase in the direction of Meudon; he became separated from his suite, and,

being thirsty, entered a villager's house to refresh himself and inquire his way. He found no one but an old woman sitting by the bedside of a sick man.

"My God, Monsieur," she said, "I am alone with my poor son; my husband has gone to fetch the Blessed Sacrament."

"Your son is not well?" inquired the Grand Dauphin, who had always a word to say.

"Indeed, no, my good gentleman, the small-pox is a dreadful disease. . . ."

"He has small-pox!"

He went out quickly, perturbed in spirit; he ran till he was out of breath, and when he had rejoined his followers, he said to them with terror:

"I have just seen a man sick of the small-pox."

He returned in great gloom to the Château, and on the morrow took to his bed, never more to leave it. The doctors arrived. 'Tis an attack of gout, said one; apoplexy, said another. All diseases were enumerated except the small-pox, whatever he might say to persuade the faculty. The drugs they prescribed him prevented the disease from showing itself, and Monseigneur must have had a real disgust at dying, in spite of the absolutions with which he was supplied. He was carried to Saint-Denis without being embalmed, and with no pomp.

This death, sudden as it was, and lamely explained by the doctors, gave impetus to the sinister rumours which circulated at the Court and in Paris; the Duc d'Orléans paid no attention to them. Madame, who had seen the dying man, went about declaring that the doctors had killed the Grand Dauphin by drying up the small-pox pustules; slander said, more loudly than she, that the pretended small-pox was nothing else than poison which had produced the blotches on the skin. They even accused the old woman of the cottage of having poisoned the water she had given Monseigneur. Nevertheless, these rumours ceased for a time, to revive with the unexpected misfortunes of the succeeding year.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne, the darling of the King, who was amused by her queer tricks, was also affected by the Maintenon, who used her to influence the King. This Dauphine was charming when she did not exhibit herself in a horribly dirty condition. She was not even ugly when she had a colour.

Louis XIV used to take her on his knees with a familiarity which excited criticism, and when she cracked off her witticisms he would say, with a laugh: "Harlequin is not dead!" The Duchess was equally audacious in her actions, but of this the King, who could not have put up with her mode of life, knew nothing; for the Maintenon had threatened with her displeasure anyone who should denounce the doings and actions of the Savoyarde to the King. The Dauphin had the incredible good nature to love his wife, who loved so many others. He had his suspicions of what was passing to his detriment; but whenever he would have reproached her, she shut his mouth with a kiss and a glance. If I am to believe the fine stories told me, the conduct of the Dauphine was by no means exemplary; the frivolity, which the King delighted in, degenerated into all kinds of excess. She was surrounded by a seraglio of young ladies. The Maintenon, whom the Dauphine called her aunt, certainly merited another name. When the King was not at Marly, the Dauphine invited a number of young people to nocturnal expeditions in the gardens, and the initiated have shown themselves as discreet as Echo. In fine, whether it be a slander or not, it has been openly stated that the Duchess's greatest pleasure was to be dragged along the ground by her feet; truly a singular amusement for a Dauphine of France. It is true that after the marriage of the Duchesse de Berri, who commenced the same kind of life, the Duchesse de Bourgogne changed, or modified, to some extent, her own. "I wish to be more restrained than the Duchesse de Berri," she said. Of her lovers, she only retained the handsome Nangis, Commander of the Regiment of the King. Nangis was in every respect the friend of the husband, who would have been jealous of the entire world before becoming so of his beloved Nangis. The Dauphine, in order the better to hoodwink her husband, ordered Nangis to feign to be in love with the little La Vallière. The latter took the matter seriously. Madame de La Vallière surpassed the Dauphine in beauty and coquetry; she found it so amusing to be loved before her rival's eyes, that she made no secret of it. She contrived that the Dauphin should see a letter of the Dauphine to Nangis, the latter's name having been carefully erased. The good Dauphin, scandalised to the last degree by this letter, the handwriting of which he could not fail to

recognise, confided his grievance to Nangis, who had not enough eloquence to persuade him to keep it to himself. Fearing the consequences of an explanation, he left Paris without leave. The Dauphin, as clumsy as all husbands in a similar situation, treated his wife, who had the cunning of a hundred women, to a scene. She feigned astonishment, repudiating the letter and everything. Her judge, moved by her protestations, was suddenly softened; she, on her side, flew into a passion at being so unjustly accused. The Dauphin had to console her tenderly. After which she sighed, shed tears, and cried:

"The day is drawing near when I must die."

"Die!" repeated the Dauphin, with a shudder, "and why?"

"Alas! an astrologer of Turin, who drew my horoscope, predicted to me that I should die in my twenty-seventh year, and through your fault."

"Do not believe in predictions, they are the work of Satan."

"I believe so much in them, that I am going to prepare myself for any event. But tell me, please; you can not remain without a wife, on account of your rank and piety; whom will you marry?"

"I hope that God will chastise me in some other way than by your death, and if this misfortune were to befall me, I should never re-marry; for a week later, I should follow you to the tomb."

The Dauphin sealed his reconciliation as well as was possible for a bigot who fasted and prayed as he did; but the Dauphine, having sent for Nangis to obtain an explanation of the unlucky letter, heard with an inconceivable despair of his abrupt departure; she vented her anger on the vases and the furniture in her apartment, and this temper terminated in an attack of nerves. She returned to her senses, saying: "It is all over, I shall not recover!"

An attack of measles announced itself in copious sweating when she went to bed; she rose imprudently to write to her friend Nangis; the doctor Chirac arrived and compelled her to go to bed again; he bled her in the foot, contrary to the opinion of Madame, whose German obstinacy had some good in it. The bleeding over, from being red and burning, she turned icy-cold and pale.

"Dear God!" cried Madame, "I would sooner they had bled me than Madame la Dauphine!"

"Would you set yourself up as more skilful than these gentlemen?" said the Maintenon angrily, pointing to Chirac, Boudin, and Fagon.

The latter fell to laughing, and Madame left the room, saying:

"We shall see what will be the result of this."

From this time the illness of the Dauphine took a turn for the worse, and the certainty which she felt of not recovering, doubtless contributed to her death. The King came every other moment to visit her, imploring doctors and apothecaries to restore his beloved daughter to him; nothing could be done; delirium, confusion, were followed by the death agony; the Dauphine expired in the arms of Louis XIV.

It was like a thunderbolt; I happened to be with the Duc d'Orléans at the moment when he received the news of this death; he raised eyes and hands to Heaven in an uneasy silence.

"Monseigneur," I said, "I dreamed last night that the Dauphine was dead."

He looked at me fixedly, and made no answer; meanwhile, the calumnies started at the death of Monseigneur had become rooted in the public mind. It was everywhere said that the Dauphine had been poisoned. The Maintenon conducted this black intrigue; a snuff-box full of Spanish snuff, which the Duc d'Orléans had given to the Dauphine, supplied material for absurd presumptions; it was alleged that the deceased had first felt indisposed after taking a pinch. It was not the only fable with which it was sought to blacken the Duc d'Orléans. The King was prostrate with grief; the Dauphin, gloomier and more devout than of wont, shut himself up in his apartment for hours on end. In the midst of this general trouble, the autopsy of the Dauphine's body was made.

This operation multiplied the commotion; Chirac, Boudin, Fagon, and Maréchal took part in it; the whole time of the experiment was spent in heated discussions on both sides; Boudin and Fagon declared for poison, Chirac and Maréchal protested against this. The whole of the body was in its natural state; but the head, where the Dauphine had suffered so much, presented an extraordinary appearance of disorder; the brain had black spots in it, and the fibres seemed to be

broken. The doctors communicated the result of their examination to the King; the wrangle about poison commenced again, in presence of Madame de Maintenon, Père Le Tellier, and His Majesty, who was forced to impose silence upon them. However, some details of the doctors' consultation transpired.

A week after the Dauphine's death, the Dauphin was taken ill, with particular symptoms which, this time, were characteristic of poison; his body was covered with tumours and ulcers; he felt violent colics and spasms in his bowels.

Doubtless, the Maintenon was not capable of poisoning the Dauphin in order to accuse the Duc d'Orléans, but I would take no oath that it was not done to please her; as the person most interested in this poisoning was the Duc du Maine, I refrain from casting suspicion on anybody. Had it been necessary, however, I should not have hesitated.

As soon as the Dauphin's illness was made public, I remembered the *Century* of Nostradamus and ran to the Palais-Royal. The Prince was in his chemical laboratory, so absorbed in the perusal of this same *Century* that he took no heed of my arrival.

"Monseigneur," I said, "are you not going to Versailles?"

"What to do there?" he asked, as though my question had awoken him with a start.

"The Dauphin is very ill, and I am afraid of people being astonished at your not participating in the sorrows of the Royal Family."

"I doubt if my absence would be noticed any more than my presence; I might be dead, and they would not even come to sprinkle holy water on me."

"But, after all, if the Dauphin dies . . ."

"I hope they will not blame me; I have given him no snuff-box as I did to the Dauphine!"

There was a grieved irony in his words which struck me; I rose silently, and the Duc extended his hand to me, which I kissed with ardour.

"Monseigneur," I said, "do not forget that the Maintenon and the Duc du Maine will leave nothing undone to destroy you."

"They will not stop at a crime, if they can attribute it to me," said the Duc.

The Dauphin became worse and worse; the devouring fever, the fire in his bowels, and his sinister weakness, resisted all remedies; the doctors looked at one another in discouragement; as for the Dauphin, although the dangerous nature of his sickness was concealed from him, he took his last dispositions with admirable coolness. On the day before his death it chanced that he heard the coffin of his wife being nailed down in the apartment overhead; his eyes filled with tears, and he cried, raising his hand towards the direction of the sound, "Not yet!" Then he went back to his breviary, and hastened on with his prayers in a low voice; he communicated, heard the Mass, received extreme unction, and all was said.

The storm at Court was terrible, since on the previous night it had been stated in the town that the Dauphin had been poisoned; and everybody fled, with suspicion in their eyes. The King, impressed by these two deaths, so sudden and so strange, was himself in bed in a sufficiently disquieting state. He said to the Maintenon:

"You will see, it is all our deaths they want!"

Père Le Tellier, who hardly left his side, attacked the Duc d'Orléans with perfidious insinuations, arming himself with all the popular stories, with slanders, and, above all, religion. The poor King, weakened by his despair, merely said: "O my God! what must I do!" I am in possession of a report written by a certain Père Arnoux, a Jesuit, who occupied himself with chemistry, and was sometimes admitted by the Duc d'Orléans to his experiments. This Jesuit, the mouthpiece of Père Le Tellier, was one of the principal instruments in this unfortunate affair.

"I will tell the truth, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," he wrote to Madame de Maintenon; "I ask pardon of God for having seen what I have seen, heard what I have heard; the Duc d'Orléans, whom I accuse of all the poisonings which have taken place at the Court of France, has a secret closet in the Palais-Royal, where mysteries of iniquity are machinated; it is there that he often spends the night in magical operations, seconded by a German named Homberg, who boasts of possessing the philosopher's stone. He has the power of evoking devils who aid him in his criminal labours. The furnaces, alembics, unknown potents, maleficent herbs—all things in this arsenal denounce an art

accursed of God and man. He has prepared, in my presence, poisons of which a single drop, he told me, was enough to cause death. I have noticed phials which bore on them labels with the names of MONSEIGNEUR, the DAUPHIN, and the DAUPHINE. The Duc d'Orléans wished to predict my destiny, but I refused, for fear of committing mortal sin; I could tell also of books in Hebrew and Arabic, which I supposed to be concerned with the black art; spheres, compasses, and other astrological instruments have proved to me that this impious Prince was addicted to those occult sciences which the Church condemns. . . ."

And the remainder of this curious document, which was given me by M. d'Argenson, is of a like crass infamy. I suppose they did not dare make use of it.

The autopsy of the Dauphin's body lent force to all these accusations, which the Duc d'Orléans only met with silence. The traces of poison were too obvious to be denied; his entrails were blackened as though they had been burnt; his heart was choked up with putrefying blood; his lungs were spotted and decomposed; only the head was intact. It was in vain that Maréchal implored the doctors to consider the King, as such a piece of news might be his death; Fagon and Boudin, acting at the Maintenon's instigation, hastened to afflict Louis XIV, who was especially inconsolable at the death of the Dauphine. He had called for her portrait, which he covered with his kisses and tears. Père Le Tellier, who held all the threads of this infernal intrigue, exhorted the penitent to treat the poisoners only as an incensed judge. M. d'Argenson had orders to make secret researches for anything which would serve for the discovery and punishment of the crime. The lieutenant of police was too devoted to the Duc d'Orléans to cause him pain; he sent for me, and advised me, as a precaution, to persuade the Prince to betake himself to a place of safety; the Duc d'Orléans, to whom I related our conversation, nobly refused to do anything which might resemble flight.

"I am innocent," he said to me, "and to seem to dread the intervention of justice would be a confession of guilt; the true authors of the crime have more to fear from justice than I."

He persisted, however, in keeping aloof from Court, and his enemies profited by the circumstance to blacken him the more.

People now remembered a similar accusation brought against

the Duc d'Orléans in 1709, by the Princesse des Ursins. It was a question of nothing less than of poisoning the King of Spain and his children; they sought to find in the deaths of the Princes a sequence of this pretended plot, as ridiculous an invention as the rest; I omitted to speak of this incident, which always seemed to me pure comedy. At a time when the Duc d'Orléans, on his return from Spain, found himself encompassed by calumnies, each one more atrocious and absurd than the last, Chalais, the inquisitor of the Ursins, came mysteriously to Poitou, after writing to M. de Torcy that he was going there on the service of the King of France. After eighteen days spent in expeditions and manœuvres, Chalais arrested a cordelier, well known for his villany in the Convent of Bressuire. This fellow cried loudly: "The Prince and I are lost." He was confined in the prison of Poitiers. After this fine stroke, Chalais repaired to Marly, had several conferences with the King, and went afterwards to Paris. Then the Duc d'Orléans' accusers redoubled in audacity, and the unknown monk had the honour of being designated as his accomplice. The Parliament, inspired by the Maintenon and Chalais, inclined towards an impeachment; the monk, who was given to oaths, strong drink, and lechery, like the rest of the monkish crew, was sent to the Bastille, where he was kept three months in solitary confinement, his only visitor being M. d'Argenson. The result of this huge scandal was the monk's silence; something even transpired of the part which they had forced him to play. Finally, the poor monk was transferred to the tower of Ségovie, where, unless he has died recently, he still remains.

I cannot conceive the folly of the Maintenon, who could imagine nothing better than to bring forward this rascally monk again in her fresh inculpation of the Duc d'Orléans. Madame des Ursins, who did not know her disgrace was so imminent, wrote that Marchand (the name of the monk) had told his jailers that all the Royal Family who died during the last three years had been poisoned, and that the Duc d'Orléans, once become King of France, would come and deliver him at the head of his armies. These puerilities, repeated, commented, distorted, gained more credence than they deserved. The lower orders, ever obstinately set on the marvellous, greeted the story of the monk as a manifest proof of the Duc d'Orléans' guilt; they were

overjoyed, moreover, to think of seeing a Prince of the Blood tried and, perhaps, hanged, like a vulgar malefactor.

This hostile disposition of the populace was already apparent, when the Duc d'Orléans accompanied Madame to sprinkle holy water on the Dauphine. The Dauphin was not yet dead. I found some pretext to excuse me from assisting at this ceremony; I confess that my sorry reputation did not completely reassure me as to my fate, in the event of the Prince's impeachment; my conscience defended me against these fears in vain. I sought to obliterate myself behind the Duc d'Orléans. I saw him return, pale, haggard, and indignant; he told me that the people had made a riot round his carriage, and that he had heard atrocious suggestions, murmurs, and cries of insult. Madame had been so aggrieved at these insults, that she had said openly through the window: "The Maintenon knows how to choose her tools!" These words might have cost her stoning.

It was far worse when the Duc d'Orléans went alone to give holy water to the Dauphin; Madame had frequently begged him to refrain, for fear of attacks more daring than before. She escaped a violent scene by staying behind at her correspondence. The Prince commanded me to accompany him, in spite of my wishes; it was a miracle that we returned; the roads through which we passed were crowded with hired wretches, who raised an appalling tumult; some pointed their fingers at the Duc d'Orléans, others made threatening gestures; I effaced myself, as well as I could, at the back of the carriage; the Prince, on the contrary, made a pretence of seeing and hearing nothing. A tall man, all in rags, came up insolently to the window and said: "Poisoners are burned on the Place de Grève!" Ravannes, who was escorting us on horseback, incensed at this indignity, drew his sword and slightly wounded the leader of the rioters, who gave himself up for dead. This was enough to make them tear us to pieces; there was a fresh frenzy of cries and insults. His Royal Highness realised the risk we all ran. "M. de Ravannes," said he, "why have you ill-treated this worthy fellow? My friend," he continued, throwing his purse to the wounded man, who was inciting the populace to vengeance, "here is a cure for you, and come and see me at the Palais-Royal." The diversion caused by this act enabled our coachman to whip his horses to a gallop, and thus we came to the mortuary

chapel. All the members of the Court who were present kept aloof from the Duc d'Orléans, and even Massillon, whom I saw in the distance, made a sign of the head to me, which suggested compassion. Our return to the Palais-Royal was cruelly anxious; cries and threats were renewed, and some of the mob were daring enough to pelt us with mud. This lasted until we had reached the Palais, in front of which a multitude of men, armed with stones, torches, and staves had assembled. The guard and the servants of the Duc d'Orléans remained on duty all night, apprehending some attack on the part of these madmen; and when they retired, towards dawn, shouting: "Faggots for the Duc d'Orléans!" the latter entered his carriage and retired to Saint-Cloud, whither came Madame to rejoin him, more incensed than ever against the "Old Hag." As for the Duchesse d'Orléans, she remained at Versailles during these alarming events.

"Madame d'Orléans," said the Prince to me, "is not the last person to accuse me."

"There remains only one door of safety," I answered; "from being accused, become accuser in your turn."

"If they compel me, I will do so."

"Believe me, Monseigneur, the Duc du Maine is not as easy in his mind as you are."

The Duc d'Orléans wrapped himself in a haughty disdain of these accusations, until the 2nd of March, when the little Dauphin, the Duc de Bretagne, died, showing the same symptoms as his father; the autopsy also furnished similar appearances. At the same time, the Duc d'Anjou* seemed *in extremis*. The consternation was at its height, and the Duc d'Orléans was singled out as a monster to the public animosity. The King, however, although he was convinced by his mistress, his confessor, and his bastard, of the guilt of his son-in-law, dared not as yet bring him to judgment. He was unwilling to cast discredit upon his family by a trial which would echo through the breadth of Europe. Meanwhile, as the Dauphine's death touched him closer than anything else, he sent for his daughter, the Duchesse d'Orléans, and sorrowfully questioned her as to what she knew. The latter was mighty careful not to bring the slightest accusation against her brother, the Duc du Maine, and she defended her husband

* Son of the Duc de Bourgogne and grandson of Louis XIV, afterwards Louis XV.

in such a manner as to allow the King to believe what he liked. Little satisfied with this enlightenment, Louis XIV summoned the Duc d'Orléans. His Royal Highness had no hesitation in obeying; but the Marquis d'Effiat, who chanced to be present, inoculated him with foolish counsels, which the Prince was weak enough to follow. I am certain the Duc du Maine had made d'Effiat his creature, and that frank courtier was a man capable of hanging his master, if he found it to be his interest. The Duc d'Orléans, cast down at all these horrors, was introduced into the presence of the King, who fixed a severe and scrutinising gaze on him. This glance caused the Prince to lose countenance; he burst into tears, and flung himself at the King's feet; the Maintenon had been careful to ensure Père Le Tellier's presence at this interview.

"Sire," cried His Royal Highness, "they accuse me of an awful crime which I abhor more than anybody. Allow me to constitute myself a prisoner in the Bastille, and inquire into the case."

"That is a course to which there can be no objection," said the confessor.

"No, Monsieur," said the King, "if you are guilty, God will punish you; if you are not . . ."

"Why refuse me the grace of making my innocence transparent? I should not be dishonoured through having been in the Bastille, were I to leave it justified!"

"Sire," said Père Le Tellier, "I see nothing improper in sending His Royal Highness to the Bastille."

"The poor Dauphine!" said the King, with a groan, in order to change the subject. "Tell me, Philippe, could your science heal the Duc d'Anjou?"

"Mine, Sire! It is true I saved the life of my daughter De Berri, when the doctors had despaired of it; but . . ."

"Well! It is your duty to try and save us the Duc d'Anjou, who is dying."

"What, Sire!" interposed Père Le Tellier, "instead of having recourse to divine providence, you will invoke means which it disowns."

"Sire!" said the Prince, "the Duc and Duchesse du Maine have indeed blackened me in your eyes!"

"Monsieur, withdraw," replied the King; "before you accuse, think to defend yourself."

The Duc d'Orléans sank back into a chair; the King made a sign to his confessor, and they both went into the oratory.

Meanwhile, the Duc d'Anjou, who now reigns as Louis XV, seemed unlikely to recover. His body and face were covered with tumours; he refused the breast of his nurses, and writhed in long convulsions. Madame de Ventadour, the child's governess, in spite of the King's express prohibition, succeeded in saving it. She had heard from Madame de Verrue, a whilom mistress of the King of Sicily, of how an antidote given her by the Duke of Savoy, had snatched her from a certain death; but Madame de Verrue, being ignorant of the nature of this antidote, could not indicate it to Madame de Ventadour, who was in despair. Madame de Verrue had sold Madame two hundred gold medals which she had stolen from the King of Sicily, and for which she could not obtain payment; she took advantage, therefore, of this debt, assiduously to frequent Madame, who had kept her informed of everything; this condition was reciprocal between the two busy-bodies. Madame de Verrue happened to speak of the antidote, which she regretted; she was ignorant of the use it was to serve.

"My child," said Madame, "I will write to the Duc d'Orléans, and this evening you shall have your antidote."

She wrote, and the Prince, who was at leisure, sent her what she asked. The Duc d'Anjou took this antidote from the hands of Madame de Ventadour, who waited for a successful issue, before divulging her temerity. The King called her his beloved daughter, and wished to know whence the antidote was procured. Madame de Verrue was summoned, and revealed the mystery; Louis XIV was astonished, but retained his ill-feeling against the Duc d'Orléans, to whom he said only this:

"Monsieur, if you had desired, these four deaths would not have happened."

His Royal Highness was in consternation at such ingratitude.

As the cabal persisted in spreading rumours and alarms, I dreaded to see the poisonings resumed.

"Monseigneur," I said to the Prince, "d'Effiat is a bad adviser; it is no fault of his that you are not, at this moment, in the Bastille."

"Indeed," he answered, "Saint-Simon has made me see the error of my action, which might have been profoundly injurious to me."

"Allow a man who has not been bought by your enemies to offer you a piece of good counsel amongst a thousand."

"The best would be, I think, to send me to join Monseigneur, the Dauphine, the Dauphin, and the little Dauphin."

"Very well! risk your life to save your honour; the Duc du Maine is the author, if not of these crimes, at least of the rumours accusing you. . . ."

"The Duchesse d'Orléans swears to me it is not so."

"Monseigneur, silence the Duc du Maine and Père Le Tellier, and everybody else will be silent."

"The Duc du Maine has the cowardice of a bastard; if I challenge him to a duel . . ."

"He will be afraid, and Père Le Tellier . . ."

"A Jesuit does not wear a sword."

"No; but I have an arm which will vanquish him without striking a blow."

It was a written proof of a base action committed by Père Le Tellier; Père La Rue, being pressed for money, had sold it to me, on the condition that I would make no use of it, save in a last extremity. I had promised him secrecy, and I did not betray it; the Duc d'Orléans has never revealed what it was.

"Good, my dear Dubois," said he, "you are the only one who has not deserted me; the King's confessor shall answer to me for everything."

His Royal Highness left that day for Sceaux, where the Duc du Maine's cabal met. It was in full assembly, and deliberating as to what it should decide: the Duchesse du Maine kept open court in the midst of her lovers and poets; the Marquis d'Effiat was the first figure he recognised, on entering into this company, which looked upon him as a phantom.

"Good-day, M. d'Effiat," he said; "this is not the Palais-Royal, you must have mistaken the door." He barely saluted the ladies, who were numerous, and began thus, speaking to the Duc du Maine: "Monsieur, brother-in-law, it has come to my ears that you are somewhat over zealous in your attacks against my honour; this does not please me at all, and I will beg you to give a formal denial of these reports which are ill calculated to maintain friendship between us."

"*Mon Dieu!* M. d'Orléans," said Madame du Maine, "what freak is this of yours, to come and discuss business before ladies?"

"This freak, Madame, is well worth the trouble of some attention, since, perhaps, it will avenge us for some odious slanders."

"Softly!" continued the Duchesse, "you have the air of an angry fighting-cock, and no longer that of a gallant and amiable Prince."

"M. du Maine," interrupted the Duc d'Orléans, his hand upon his sword, "swear before God and these witnesses, that you cherish no suspicion against me."

"What is your meaning, M. d'Orléans?" said the Duc du Maine.

"My meaning is to offer you my hand or the point of my sword; yes, Monsieur, your blood or my own, if you refuse me this satisfaction, so petty in comparison with the harm you have done me."

"Where is Crébillon?" asked the Duchesse; "here is, certainly, a fine tragedy worthy to match *Atræus and Thyestes*."

"M. du Maine," cried the Duc d'Orléans, in a voice of thunder, "make your choice."

"What a singular man you are!" said the Duc du Maine, to gain time; "but nothing could be juster; what must I say?"

"That you hold me to be incapable of a disgraceful action! . . ."

"Do not swear, M. du Maine," interposed his wife.

"Why not, Madame?" asked the former, trembling lest he should be compelled to fight; "I am delighted to declare that M. d'Orléans merits all my esteem, and beg him to hold me a little in his friendship."

"You hear him, gentlemen," said the Prince, withdrawing, "M. du Maine gives the lie to anyone who attributes any other language to him."

The Duchesse du Maine was so vexed at the cowardice of the "cripple," as she called her husband, that she refused to see anybody for a week. But I mistake;—she made an exception of her lovers.

The victory was the prelude to a second and more important triumph. On the morrow, the Duc d'Orléans went himself to the Jesuit convent, where Père Le Tellier was in retreat. He would not have succeeded in seeing him, if he had not given his name; all doors were open to the Duc d'Orléans. The

King's confessor began by assuming an attitude of rude insolence, which gave way to the most honeyed obsequiousness, upon the presentation of a certain paper; the wolf became a lamb, and Père Le Tellier was humiliated to the point of throwing himself on the Prince's mercy.

"I wish you no ill, Father," said His Highness, "and should be grieved to harm you; but I lie under the onus of the most unjust suspicions; I beg you to give me a little assistance in triumphing over them."

"I will do so, my son," replied the subtle priest, "for the greater glory of the Society."

This mighty storm was almost at once appeased; the people, which had been excited against the Duc d'Orléans, fell back into the respectful attitude which was due to his rank. I am convinced from this that Père Le Tellier was more powerful than the Maintenon; there was no more talk of impeachment nor of the Bastille. The Duc d'Orléans allowed time to complete the work he had begun so well. It is a very true saying that the humble suffer for the great; the one victim of this machination was poor Homberg, a German, whose modesty was even greater than his skill, and who assisted His Royal Highness in his laboratory; the worthy man worked hard for little profit. He found himself, none the less, owing to this affair, sent to prison and banished from France through the caprice of his judges. I had some money sent to him, to Leyden, where he died of grief. It was long before the Duc d'Orléans was entirely washed of calumny, which always leaves a trail, says the proverb. The example of the King, always cold and courteous towards him, but never affectionate, found only too many imitators. The Prince saw himself deserted in the *salons* of Marly and Versailles. He said one day to the Comte de Toulouse, who approached him: "Monsieur, do you not fear contagion?" Louis XIV did not pardon him till he was on his death-bed. The aversion so generally displayed for him did not extend to the Duchesse d'Orléans, who kept always under the Maintenon's wing. Madame, in disgust at the isolation of her son, begged him not to frequent the Court; I united in her supplications, and the Duc d'Orléans left the field free to the cabal directed by Villeroy, Vaudemont, Tallard, Tessé, and the little Blouin.

"I abdicate," he said to me, with a laugh; "see, I have descended into private life! . . . For all that I am premier Prince of the Blood, I may as well be satisfied to be happy."

"Will you read any more in Nostradamus?"

"It had nearly cost me dear."

"I will undertake to find a use for your leisure, as long as there are pretty girls in Paris."

"Faith! I did well to send away the Comtesse d'Argenton to the Pont-Saint-Maxence; I paid two millions for her debts, but I have bought back my liberty."

"The most difficult thing is to keep it."

Pleasure flew back to the Palais-Royal, and every week the Duc d'Orléans fell in love for a lifetime.

If I must tell my whole thought on the irreparable losses of the Royal Family, I believe the Dauphin and the Duc de Bretagne died of poison: by whom administered? It seems to me that the Duc d'Orléans had everything to lose by their death, and the Duc du Maine everything to gain.

CHAPTER XXIV

DUBOIS IN LOVE—ANNETTE THE WIDOW—DUBOIS AND THE DUC D'ORLÉANS AS RIVALS—THE BROKEN WINDOW—PORTRAIT OF ANNETTE—SAMUEL BERNARD—HIS UGLINESS—THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL—THE DEMOISELLES LOYSON—BIGAMY—THE WEDDING SUPPER—RIGHTS OF A HUSBAND—THE SUBSTITUTE—HUSBAND AND LOVER—THE WIDOW'S DEATH—LETTER FROM MADAME DUBOIS

I THOUGHT myself capable of anything, except of falling in love; this is an adventure for which I shall reproach myself all my life, though I live to be a hundred. However, I acted as was inevitable in this affair; assuredly, it is not my fault if I developed a passion for a young woman who only belonged to me by procuration, and who hated me as vehemently as she loved another. 'Tis true that at this period I was nothing more than Abbé Dubois. Love was not then a madness for me; to-day it would be the gravest error: in becoming a Cardinal I have put my life in order.

I had studiously exploited the Palais-Marchand for the benefit of the Duc d'Orléans; maids or wives, I had found none cruel, except a certain Annette, by trade an embroideress. She was a widow, and in her husband's lifetime I had wasted time and labour upon her impregnable virtue; but, on her husband's death, I resumed my attacks in such a manner as to prove I expected an unequivocal result. The more difficulties I encountered, the more honour I thought to do the Prince with this glorious victory. I must say, for the honour of women, that she did not heed my fine phrases, refused my presents, and discouraged me with mighty hard words. She little cared whether or no I bought her wares, and, when I did, felt herself no more obliged to me thereby.

"Faith!" said the Duc d'Orléans to me, one day, when I was trumpeting the charms of my widow, "since I have heard you speak so much of her, the fancy takes me to see her."

"Provided, Monseigneur, that one fancy is not succeeded by another."

"In the meantime, conduct me to this wonder of the Palais; Lord grant that she be not a virtue of the strength of your tin-wife!"

"Nay, Monseigneur, I love her too well to give her up to you."

"I do not ask you to give her up to me, since she does not belong to you."

"Not as yet, Monseigneur."

"Then you will allow me to enter the lists."

"I foresee that you will soon put me out of them."

"You look like a man in love; I tremble for you."

"And I tremble far more for myself."

We once more assumed the names and the dress of Dutrot and Lucas; the tin-merchant had gone away from the Palais-Marchand with his wife and his wares; we had no fear of being recognised. According to the plan I had arranged, the Prince, on passing Annette's shop, intentionally broke a window; he entered suddenly with an assumed air of despair:

"Heavens! Madame," he said, covering his eyes with his hands, "I am a clumsy rascal."

"Indeed he is," I added; "my friend who has just disembarked from the Lyons coach, has not yet got the fine manners and ways of Paris."

"Mademoiselle, I beg you to repair the damage," interposed the Prince, handing her his purse.

"Do not be surprised if he treats you as a Miss; he does not know you are a widow."

"Gentlemen," she answered, coldly enough to freeze the hottest gallant, "it is sufficient that this little misfortune should be the result of an accident, for me to hold you blameless, whilst thanking you for your excuses."

"The harm is done; it must be repaired," continued the Duc, holding out his purse, stuffed with gold.

"Are you mad?" I said, to prevent him discovering himself.

"At how many *louis* do you value a window? Give her, rather, one to mend it. You accept, Madame Annette?"

"With all my heart, if that is all you want to satisfy you."

I dragged away His Royal Highness, who, in his astonishment

at seeing such beauty joined to such grace, could not keep his countenance. A glazier, well paid in advance, was sent to the shop, and, acting on our instructions, he talked loudly of the wealth and family of M. Lucas; but the fair shopkeeper seemed to pay no attention.

"Dubois," said the Prince, "why can I not say with Cæsar: '*Veni, Vidi, Vici!*' Annette is a treasure. . . ."

"To whom do you say it, Monseigneur? But, I am sore afraid, a treasure destined neither for you nor for me."

"Good! The inhuman widow may resist an Abbé of your appearance, but she will gladly surrender to the Duc d'Orléans."

"Perhaps, Monseigneur, if you consent to marry her."

"I! Bigamy is a strange thing, even for a Prince of the Blood."

"She is one of those virtues set on the Sacrament, and abhorring widowhood; she would marry a church rat, as long as she was married."

"Well, I want her at all cost."

"You would still require Madame d'Orléans' consent."

For the first time, I felt an egoism resembling jealousy. I did my best to dissuade the Prince from his pursuit of Annette, whom I reserved exclusively for myself. I did not take exact account of what was passing in me, because I dared not admit to myself that I loved this girl differently to all others. My happiness consisted in seeing her, in talking to her, and that to possess myself in patience. That was all I loved in Annette. Her portrait, which I made from memory after her death, is a very imperfect likeness; however, I still love to examine her large eyes veiled with the long lashes, her black and lustrous hair, and her smiling mouth. Alas! all these beauties became mine by right, but I never had more than the privilege of seeing them. This was little for a husband; it was much to a lover. I returned to weave "perfect love" with my fair embroideress, fully determined as I was to save her from the Duc d'Orléans, or, at least, to keep her for my private enjoyment. I found her more seriously preoccupied than she would have been over the broidering of a vest.

"M. Dutrot," she said to me, with an expression she did not succeed in rendering indifferent, "is your friend not coming?"

"I hope not," I answered; "he is an awkward fellow, who brings bad luck to your shop."

"Indeed, he is mighty careless; but one would judge him better were one to hear him speak."

"I do not think so; a libertine speaks as he acts."

"Is he married, please?"

"More likely twice than once, and he has many children."

"That is a pity," she said, sorrowfully.

I devoured her with my eyes, and sought to reap my own advantage from the tender feeling which inspired her for the Duc d'Orléans. I was playing my shepherd's pastoral fairly well; accursed be the intruder who came between us!

I saw a man arrive whose features were as uncouth as his intelligence, a sort of deformed dwarf, with one hump, at least, beneath his shoulders, with crooked legs, doing the polite with the rudest of airs; his hair was red, and he gaped his exaggerated mouth with an appalling smile. He is still living, and although he has poets and flatterers in his pay, I doubt if anyone will dare to give the lie to the portrait I have painted of him, jealousy apart. This agreeable personage, whom I remembered to have noticed at Court or elsewhere, was no other than the famous Samuel Bernard—a "Jew by birth; and a Jew by trade"—a millionaire banker, insolent as an upstart, sottish beyond description, and miserly or prodigal as circumstances required. I did not leave my seat, and let him dart his glances and play his part of a Croesus in love.

"My divinity," said he, in a voice to make you shudder, "here I am, once more, before the fairest feet in the world."

"I doubt whether you will get any further," I interrupted.

"Who is this Abbé?" he asked, glaring at me with a vindictive eye.

"Apparently an Abbé," I answered, to get rid of the monster.

"*Ma mie*," he resumed, "when will you leave this booth for the palace I want to give you?"

"When I wish to accept it," she said, with a dignity without prudery.

"Ha, ha!" cried the old ape, "I can procure you a place in the King's household. He calls me Samuel quite familiarly, and borrows my money as if I were his equal."

"Monsieur," she replied, "I will have no place except in my husband's house."

"Little fool," he said, with a laugh, "you ask the impossible."

"I ask nothing from you, M. Bernard," she answered, to my great satisfaction.

"Ah!" said he, "I like to be resisted; I am not accustomed to it. To show you that I bear no malice, I will buy all these trifles from you."

"I cannot sell my wares twice over," she replied.

"Good!" he cried, "I see through your subterfuge. Who is the fop who has anticipated me? I will pay him for these fripperies twice, three times their value."

"Monsieur," said I, "if you were to give me a thousand crowns beyond my bargain, I would not yield them to you."

"This is a mighty proud Abbé," he grumbled; and he went out, his vanity wounded to the quick.

I knew, without any doubt, that the widow would refuse all who did not offer her marriage. The manner in which she dismissed Samuel Bernard proved to me that she was insensible to the charms of wealth. This strange caprice seemed to me sublime, and I gave myself up to a sentiment that I dared not call love. I followed up the banker's gallantries with my own, with a similar lack of success. Annette stopped me in the midst of my urgent solicitations, and began to weep.

"See," said she, "the wretched position in which I am! The first comer thinks he has a right to talk the language of gallantry to me."

"What? Do you complain of the privilege of pretty women?"

"For shame! They would not have done it when I had an excellent husband."

"Faith! if it only needs that, I can find one for you."

"Please God! I am no mincing prude, but I hold to my self-respect, and every day I pray God to send me a husband."

"He has heard you, and assuredly your service is to be preferred to God's; here be the husband I can offer you."

"You, Monsieur l'Abbé!"

"Why not? I am well worth another. The ceremony can take place to-morrow; it is enough to conceal my collar, and change my title of Abbé for that of Chevalier."

"You are not jesting with me?"

"Heaven forbid! I am speaking frankly; and, if you accept, by the day after to-morrow the affair will be settled; you will be my wife, I shall be your husband."

"If you will not abuse a poor widow, I will repay you with thanks and devotion a thousandfold."

"You must give up your shop, for I am rich enough for both of us; and to the devil with Samuel Bernard's palace!"

"But, in your new estate, can you retain your benefices?"

"Yes; and even acquire new ones. Leave it to me. I will not marry you in any but a fair manner; say but the word, I will secularise myself, and to-morrow, the wedding."

It was agreed that, on account of my former estate, the religious portion of the marriage should be celebrated out of church, and by the "intervention" of an Abbé, who was my friend. Annette seriously desired a husband. She had thought to propose an embarrassing dilemma to me; she found herself taken at her word, and only maintained her refusals in the tone of persons who are afraid that faith will not be kept with them. I left, promising to return on the morrow with witnesses and a notary. I felt my conscience heavier than when I came there; and whatever joy I experienced at the approaching possession of such charms, I secretly addressed myself reproaches which redoubled my anxiety. I was about to embark on actual bigamy, and the fact well merited thinking twice over. I reappeared before the Prince with so piteous an aspect that he inquired if I had become eunuch to the Grand Turk.

"Very much the contrary," said I; "I am to be married to-morrow."

"You, Abbé!"

"Undoubtedly; unless you would like to take my place."

"Which?"

"At your risk and peril."

Thereupon I related to him how I had come to offer marriage to the widow, who had not required pressing for her consent.

"You see," said I in conclusion, "what a thing love is."

"It appears to be bigamy."

"Alas! Monseigneur, one is flesh and blood, so please the law, and I risk much to obtain much."

"For shame! Your first night is like to cost you dear."

"A hundred crowns, perhaps, including the priest and notary, the witnesses, the relations, and the supper."

"What diabolical ruse have you invented?"

"The simplest in the world—a secret marriage, in which the only thing genuine will be the pleasure of the bridegroom."

"Do you wish me to play the bridegroom?"

"No, Monseigneur, you shall play nobody. Only I will invite you to my wedding; you have all that is requisite for being my cousin."

"So be it. We shall have, and we shall be, all that is necessary."

On the following day, I returned to my widow, who had not slept for thinking of the ceremony. I found her more charming than ever, and my remorse did not hold good against such a wealth of graces. I had put on a town coat, smart enough to be a recommendation of its wearer. She thanked me for my goodness to her, and we talked of the marriage. I excused myself for the secrecy I wished to maintain on account of my family, which was very hostile to misalliances, and we agreed upon the hour, the place, and the contract. At eleven o'clock at night I was to fetch Annette, who was to await me with her nearest kinsmen, traders, and even working-folk, dazzled like herself by her good fortune.

I required a place propitious to my schemes, and, as I was in love, I did not consider money. I reminded me, very appropriately, of the Demoiselles Loysons, who, since they were twelve years old, had held their court in the Bois de Boulogne, where they gave private audiences in the thickets. They were pretty, not too fatigued, and with wits superior to their condition. We were the best friends in the world, and they entered into my views with the keenness which such women bring to the seduction of innocence and virtue. I hired, for two days, an apartment in the Rue Traversière, with furniture and servants. The Loysons were installed there, and I was tempted to forget with them the nearness of my marriage. Meanwhile, Manet and Forceville, my *valets-de-chambre*, who filled the place of my dear Parel, were thoroughly initiated as to how to run the risk of hanging; and thus I had a notary and a priest at my orders. A magnificent supper had been prepared, and the elder Loysons undertook to procure me some relations, aunts and cousins,

at a moderate price. I trusted to her for this office, and, curled and perfumed, a very Adonis, accompanied by the Duc d'Orléans, still disguised, I went to the shop of the embroideress, where I found a whole family, which respectfully embraced me. I escorted all this company to my hotel in the Rue Traversière, and the *fête* began. The Loysons had procured me a brilliant society, and dear friends whom I had never seen.

Manet, in a notary's robe, made us sign the contract, in which the idiot had written down the name of Dubois in full; I had the presence of mind to repair this clumsiness. Next came Forceville, disguised as an abbé, and the parody of the marriage was played to a marvel. I uttered my *yes* without stammering, and Annette responded with an air which made me believe she was grateful to me for so much love. Suddenly, a burst of stifled laughter made me start. I raised my head, and, facing me, perceived my first wife, who was enjoying the singular spectacle. I was blankly disappointed, and dreaded lest she should indulge in some outbreak; but the presence of the Duc d'Orléans, whom she recognised, imposed silence on her, and she contented herself with casting Medusa looks, which turned me to stone. I have always believed that the Prince had contrived this surprise to deprive me of the fruit of my bigamy. What did he not expect of the morrow?

I forced myself to keep a serious countenance; but, when I was withdrawing tenderly with my bride, the other, without saying a word, came and placed herself in front of me, in such a manner as to freeze my transports. I lost countenance, and, leading her into a corner, I said furiously:

"Strumpet, I could have you driven out by my lackeys; but I will allow you to assist at the comedy; only, at the first word, I will send you to rot in the Bastille."

The warning produced its effect; but the cursed Prince had her put at my side. He was also careful to secure my widow, whom he crammed with sweets and dainties. I was almost displeased that the supper proved very gay, and the princesses brought by the Loysons grew unlicensed in their merriment. I did not address a word to my real wife, who had not gained in beauty, as I had leisure to notice. I looked at my watch every moment; but the guests were little inclined to retire. At last, the Duc d'Orléans, whom these vexatious folk wearied as much

as they did me, spoke of putting the bride to bed. Madame Dubois then gave me a glance that was gleaming with malice. I informed the guests that beds were prepared for those who cared to stay; some accepted, others went away, and I was left alone with my real wife and the Duc d'Orléans. The Loysons, assisted by an old aunt of Annette's, presided over the going to bed of my widow. I was burning with impatience to see them leave the place, and was about to hurry them in good round terms, when the Duc d'Orléans caught hold of my arm.

"The time is now come, my dear Dubois," said he, "when you have need of all your friendship for me, and all your courage."

"Courage!" cried I; "I am not afraid of these things."

"I speak of an immense sacrifice; but the recompense for it will also be immense."

"Be off from here, strumpet!" I said to Madame Dubois, who was laughing in my face. "I will let you see what is the reward for spying on what I do and say."

"Quietly, Abbé! Have you the heart to ill-treat your wife on your wedding night?"

"What do you mean? It would seem as though I meant to lie with this baggage!"

"At your convenience, my husband," she said, with effrontery.

"Undoubtedly, my dear Dubois," continued the Prince, "since you have ceded your rights over the other to me."

"My rights!" I cried, determined to maintain them; "Monseigneur, to-morrow—in a few days, with pleasure."

"You can resume them to-morrow, or when it seems good to you."

"No, by Heavens! It shall not be, Prince though you are, and before you make me a husband like most others, you shall at least wait for my permission."

"Dubois," he said, with animation, "it is only just that I should have my share in this jest, in which I have compromised myself with a rascal like yourself; the priority is mine for many reasons. . . ."

"The lion's reasons," I retorted: "the first is that you are called the Duc d'Orléans; the second is that you are the stronger; and, if I am to mention the third, that you would chastise me to begin with; there is the whole fable of La Fontaine."

The sarcasm produced an impression, for the Prince drew me on one side, and said to me in softened tones: "Listen, Dubois, I would pardon you these caprices if you had my birth and rank; you must really concede something to them. . . ."

"Yes; except my wife!"

"You are jesting; I should be sorry for you, if she were really your wife; the farce might end more tragically than it has begun."

"Very well!" I said, after reconsidering the matter, "how will you reward me for such a sacrifice?"

"I swear to you that on the King's death I will employ you in whatever way you desire."

"Will you make me minister?"

"Your pretensions are a little exalted, but, knowing your talent, I do not despair of seeing you in that position."

"Since it is your wish, it is enough to say that it is my wish too; but do not hope that the widow will be an accomplice in this conspiracy against my pleasures."

"That is my business. It would seem as though you had chosen the nuptial chamber in my interest; a little screened door in the alcove!"

"To be sure, Monseigneur, I thought of you! O, the power of princes! You make me a traitor to love! . . ."

"Old fool, I recommend you to talk of love at the age of fifty-seven, and after the pretty life you have led!"

"Do not doubt it, Monseigneur, I feel all the fire of a first attachment, and my wedding night will not have cooled it."

They came to inform me that the bride was in bed, and I entered the room with bowed head, and undressed myself in perfect silence, except for a sigh, to which Annette responded with another which pierced my heart. I knew that the Prince was at the door of the alcove, in the night costume which I had just so uselessly donned. My conscience felt remorse, and I was on the point of being ruined for ever, by giving myself up to the charms of the moment, when the Prince's voice recalled me to my duty. "Who is there?" said I, feigning the uneasiness of the newly married husband, whom the least noise alarms, and I opened the little door of the alcove, where I made a sign to the Prince to take my place, after having cried loudly: "The devil take you! it was worth while disturbing me for such a trifle!" I closed the door again with temper, leaving the task of com-

pleting the explanation to the Duc d'Orléans; I made my way towards a bed I believed to be vacant, and great was my astonishment to find myself in the conjugal company. I opposed my enemy to the utmost, and fell asleep quite consoled.

I was aroused with a start by the cries which issued from the adjoining chamber; my suspicion of what was happening gave me no time to clothe myself more decently, and I hastened to restore peace. The bride, informed of her mistake by the first rays of day, had uttered piercing cries in testimony of her innocence; I found her in a very appetising state of disorder, sobbing bitterly, and in extreme despair, in spite of the Duc d'Orléans' efforts to appease this violent grief. Directly I entered, she flung herself at my knees, saying: "My dear husband, pardon me, I am innocent; if you doubt it, kill me."

"Kill you! and why?"

"I am dishonoured! But I swear to you I had no share in what has happened!"

"I can believe you; I am responsible for everything."

"You, Monsieur?"

"Yes; and I love you none the less for it."

"Monsieur, Monsieur, do not trifle with my despair."

"Egad! I thank you for it; you are as innocent as the babe—to be born nine months hence."

"Monster!"

"Where the devil, Madame, does the monster come in?"

"Miserable that I am! Where is the cavern dark enough to hide my shame?"

"Faith, Madame! there would be a lack of caverns, if one were needed for every faithless wife!"

"Hold your tongue, Abbé," cried the Prince, "enough impertinence! Madame, I implore you," he continued, taking a step towards her. . . .

"If you come one step nearer," said she, "I will throw myself out of the window."

Half-dressed, the elder Loysons and my legitimate wife appeared on the scene, the latter, bursting with joy at the sight of my embarrassment. She was ghastly pale, and had a fixed stare; later, I remembered these symptoms, hardly noticed at the time. The deplorable condition of Annette had such an effect on Madame Dubois' wits, that she had a nervous

attack, followed by convulsions, during which she rolled on the floor, foaming at the mouth, her teeth clenched. Had she died during this attack (which might easily have been the case), another case of poison would have been inevitably attributed to me! To believe certain folk, there is no such thing as a natural death amongst the great. The Loysons, at the sight of these horrible convulsions, cried out that the Dubois (the impudent creature retained my name), like herself, had been bitten by a mad dog, and, almost at the same moment, she too was seized with convulsions.

The fear of madness, a sort of panic terror to which the bravest are subject, drove us from the room. Annette fled into another chamber; the Prince and I followed her. As to the two women, whether their madness was real or imaginary, they were escorted to the sea, and cured — doubtless as a result of the tapers and prayers offered to Heaven by their kind friends of the Bois de Boulogne. One day of weeping exhausts the most profound grief; the widow, who had no suspicion that our marriage was a mockery, was touched by all that was said to her by the amiable Prince, who passed for M. Lucas. I contented myself with observing her, seeking for a favourable opportunity to resume my rights as a husband. I reproached myself with having sacrificed love to ambition, or, rather, I inwardly reproached the Prince with profiting by my critical position to steal my property. When night was come, I ventured to say:

"Madame, you must be tired after a day spent in weeping; will you be pleased to come and take a little repose?"

"Wretch, do you wish to insult my misery?"

"Assuredly not, madame; but, since I am your husband, must I not fulfil my duties?"

"Traitor, if you ever come near me, I will not promise not to treat you as you deserve."

"Wicked woman, am I not your lord and master?"

"You are my executioner."

"Come now, your eyes have amply repaid me any harm I have done you."

I was set upon a decisive revenge. She repulsed me with so expressive an indignation, that I judged it was not the moment to renew my vain attempts. The Duc d'Orléans

commanded me to respect my wife, and I obeyed that I might have, at least, that merit in his eyes. The widow perceived the empire the Prince had over me, and made use of it to defend herself against my conjugal attacks.

"Monsieur," she said, with a grace which moved me to the verge of tears, "if so be you can make this man obey you, order him to leave my presence, or, at least, never to speak to me."

"Abbé," said the Prince, with an imperative air, "you hear. I should be displeased if you were to disobey this order."

"Sdeath, M. Lucas," I cried, "you go too far. Have I only taken a wife for your usage? I want my share, and I will have it as the law permits."

"Abbé," replied the Prince, "believe me, we have both sinned against Madame."

"A plague on it! I wish my sin had been like yours. In short, there is nothing I will not do to be agreeable to you and Madame alike."

"Take yourself off, then."

We retired to bed, each in separate directions, and in the morning I saw with pleasure that nothing was left of Annette's despair, but red eyes and an air of melancholy. The Duc d'Orléans, who had almost succeeded in obtaining pardon for the "*great liberty*," as they say at Brives-la-Gaillarde, held a council with my widow, and, according to our agreement, I listened without having the right of proffering my opinion.

"What is to become of me!" said Annette, with lamentations. "After my misfortune, I can never go back to my shop."

"I know, too well, the repugnance you have for your husband, and I shall not persuade you to live with him."

"Truly, Monseigneur," I interrupted, "you could not give a lady better advice."

"Monseigneur!" she said, with astonishment.

I perceived my blunder when it was too late to repair it, and I refrained from dwelling upon it.

"Madame," resumed the Duc d'Orléans, "would it be your pleasure to retire to the country?"

"Doubtless," I added, "somewhere two or three hundred leagues from Paris!"

"M. Dutrot," said the Prince, severely, "who is speaking to you?"

"Alas! anywhere where I shall not see this monster, I shall be as happy as one can be, when one has only death before one."

My love waxed greater in proportion to her hatred, and it was with sensible distaste that I saw myself compelled to renounce the sight of her. The Duc d'Orléans reimbursed me largely for all the expenses of my pretended marriage. By his command, I bought a house at Surènes, which I furnished sumptuously; it was there that my widow cloistered herself, to hide a fault which was none of hers. Melancholy had its term; she ended by pardoning the Prince, and forgetting me entirely. I had not enough philosophy to imitate her, when a tragical incident dealt her sensitiveness a mortal blow.

Since Samuel Bernard had become a creditor of the King, his pride had waxed as his fortune waned. He talked of nothing but His Majesty, millions, and women. The latter, whom he estimated in proportion to the price they set upon themselves, vied with Louis XIV in engulfing his gold. Samuel had his procurers in the country all the year round, and the expense he indulged in was in excess of his needs, while the conquests he owed to the avarice of great ladies gave him an opinion of his person which he would fain see shared by all the world. He reached the point of believing he was beautiful. Whence his sacrifices in order to carry off the mistresses of the most favoured courtiers. In this he often succeeded by building for these faithless ones a bridge of gold.

The disappearance of the widow of the Palais-Marchand had irritated his self-conceit; a refusal from a *grisette* seemed to him an outrage, and to obtain satisfaction he would have expended vast sums. His agents could not discover what had become of Annette. He applied to M. d'Argenson, who sold dearly, and for ready money, the oracle of the police. Samuel Bernard learned with equal surprise and anger that the Duc d'Orléans had outwitted him; he swore to supplant the Prince in his turn, if he had to reach the Danaë of Surènes in a shower of gold. There were no guards to be put to sleep, nor bolts to break, in order to enter this sanctuary. He found Annette more beautiful than ever; she also found him more hideous, another comparison to the advantage of the Prince.

"My Venus," he said, "since the King walked with me

in his park of Marly, I have had no pleasure equal to that I feel in seeing you again."

"What brings you here, Monsieur?" she said. "Have you been sent by the infamous Abbé Dutrot?"

"For shame, my dear! Do you think Samuel Bernard is the man to traffic with abbés, petty folk fit for the ante-chamber or the kitchen?"

"To be brief, what do you want, Monsieur?"

"What can I want save yourself, a morsel fit for a king or Samuel Bernard."

"Leave me, Monsieur, and beware of being seen. . . ."

"The Prince? Is that it, little one?"

"You are jesting! Ah! what a villain you are. I don't know what reason you have for coming to insult me in my own house."

"Come with me; I will give you a finer one, more richly furnished, better supplied with servants. . . . Monseigneur is not a banker; he does things meanly."

"Monseigneur!"

"It was that knave of an Abbé Dubois, who ferreted you out; I know everything. I will do him an ill turn with the King and the ministry."

"The Abbé Dubois! Great Heaven!"

"The Duc d'Orléans can boast of having the boldest of all rascals in his service!"

This revelation came upon Annette like a thunderbolt; she fell back unconscious. Samuel Bernard made off at the commotion which ensued in the house. I had been sent by the Prince, as a special messenger, under the pretext of informing the widow of an indisposition which prevented him from coming to see her. He was beginning to weary of her, and I aspired to become his successor. Annette had been carried to her bed, and the first words she uttered informed me of the cause of the disaster: "The Abbé Dubois! The Duc d'Orléans!" she repeated, in a state of dire delirium. I realised that Samuel Bernard had betrayed our secret. I attempted every consolation that was in my power; the Duc d'Orléans was equally unsuccessful. Annette had lost her reason; a violent fever carried her off after a fortnight's suffering. The Prince's affection came to life again beside this bed of death, and many a time his tears were mingled with my own.

When Annette had ceased to exist, I took the Prince back to the Palais-Royal; he wished to die with her. The Comtesse d'Argenton took advantage of these circumstances, wherein the Duc d'Orléans had need of a fair consoler, to win back to herself that frail heart so made for love. The Prince was attached to her from habit, and he treated her as his mistress until he had taken his inconstancy elsewhere. These amorous revivals never lasted long, and this, I believe, was the last of them. Madame d'Argenton was at no further pains to hide the fact of her repaying the Prince for his infidelities a hundred-fold.

I went to pay the last homage to the poor widow, who had assisted us to deceive herself; I did not claim the title of husband, which had brought so little profit to me during the two months she lived under the name of Madame Dutrot. The regrets with which I honoured her memory were more real than my marriage. I would gladly have substituted her death for that of another, who continues to enjoy good health in spite of all my wishes to the contrary. On the day after the funeral, I received this laconic epistle from my first wife:

"Monsieur my husband, my heart is so set on thwarting you that I am not yet dead; assuredly, I am less mad than you will be on the receipt of this news."

I sent to the devils this carrion which the devils would not take, and let her know, under my own hand, that if she ventured to break our agreement by letting our relation transpire, I would stop her pension and cast her into an underground dungeon. My threat proved effective.

The Duc d'Orléans was so impressed by the sudden death of the widow of Surènes, that he accused me of it, in order to tranquillise his conscience. He always spoke of her as *my victim*; this gave him relief, and I let him talk. One day he met Samuel Bernard at Court, and was unable to master his resentment.

"Monsieur," he said, "if I were King of France, I would have you hanged above the grave of a lady you have murdered."

"Monseigneur," replied the banker, "I am sure you are making a mistake. Do you take me for a doctor? I am Samuel Bernard; my fortune amounts to thirty-eight millions, and I lend money to all Europe. His Majesty so far esteems me that he has himself shown me his gardens at Marly."

CHAPTER XXV

THE POST OF SECRETARY TO THE DUC DE BERRI—DUBOIS SOLICITS IT — LONGPIERRE — INFAMOUS RUMOURS ABOUT THE DUCHESSE DE BERRI — HER LOVER, LA HAVE — A HUSBAND'S GRIEVANCES—THE KICK

THE post of secretary of commands to the Duc de Berri was vacant in 1709. I should not have been sorry to obtain it; but another, who was better with the Court, anticipated me; M. Pothon bought this office, which was more honourable than lucrative. Pothon died, and I was eager to succeed him. All my patrons lent their efforts to this end. The Duc d'Orléans promised me marvels, and his heart was set on keeping his word. Massillon offered me his services with Madame de Maintenon, whom I had ceased to see; he succeeded in persuading her to interest herself in me. The Maintenon asked the King to do her the favour of securing me the post. She met with this reply: "In God's name, Madame, talk to me no more of this rascal Abbé; I know him so well that I deem him fit for nothing but the gallows." Possibly it was Madame de Maintenon who put these somewhat harsh remarks in the King's mouth; she was thus rid of my importunities, in which I was assisted by a score of persons. I would take no rebuff, and tried to obtain an entry to the old woman, hoping to win her to my side with a few courtly flatteries; she obstinately refused to see me. This mortification put me to the blush before the lackeys; the contempt which the Maintenon openly displayed for my person vexed me more than anything.

"See," I said to Massillon, "the Maintenon has treated me as a worthless abbé; and rogues of lackeys think they have a right to be disrespectful to me."

"It is not worth troubling about," said Massillon; "if you are so set upon appreciation, you need only show yourself in Madame de Maintenon's ante-chamber, inquire after her health, come out loudly with the Duc d'Orléans' name, and the gentlemen in livery will look upon you as a personage."

"The deuce! If I ever set foot again inside that old intriguer's door, it will be to cast some home-truths at her."

"Have you no chance, then, of getting the place in question?"

"I have a thousand chances; yet you will see I shall not get it."

I thought to utilise the hold which the Duc d'Orléans had forcibly acquired over Père Le Tellier, and a letter which he wrote to that sour Jesuit would have met with the success I anticipated, but for the prejudices of the King, who said, in answer to his urgent solicitations:

"Father, I am not fond of being worried, nor of those who worry me; I wish to be left alone." He softened, however, at the severe glance his confessor darted at him. "Father," he added, with a smile, "it is not befitting that Heaven should plead the cause of hell. This Dubois is a man for hanging."

I did not altogether lose courage. The Duc d'Orléans, in spite of the bad odour he was in at Versailles, consented to come forward there in my behalf.

"At least, Monseigneur," I said, before he started, "I beg you to do nothing, unless you are resolved to speak with boldness and energy."

Louis XIV only heard him to the end, in order to disconcert him, like the others, with a dry, decisive, and contemptuous refusal. I guessed from the Prince's displeased expression that his attempt had not succeeded.

"Well, Monseigneur," I cried, "is it good news?"

"As bad as your own reputation, my dear Dubois; your very name is your worst enemy."

"Bah! Monseigneur," I answered, with effrontery, "'tis not thus that favours are obtained. You recommended me tepidly, and as a matter of form; the King thought you were not over keen on obtaining what you asked."

"Who gave you these details?"

"Some one well informed apparently. I agree with La Fontaine, that it is better to have a hundred enemies than one imprudent friend."

This little outburst of temper on my part did not last, and I renounced the place, which was granted the next day to the Baron de Longpierre, who had been tutor to the Comte de Toulouse, and was still tutor to the Duc de Chartres. He knew

a little Greek and Latin, in default of other admirers greatly admired himself, translated verses into flat and wordy French, amplified antique tragedies, and was in his entirety a mighty vain, dull, and tedious fellow. One was tempted to slumber whenever he opened his mouth. Nevertheless, I did not long envy him his post of secretary to the Duc de Berri. That Prince died, suddenly enough to revive sinister suspicions which they no longer dared to fix upon the Duc d'Orléans, his father-in-law.

The Duchesse de Berri brought no self-restraint to her gallant affairs with the young lords; the malevolence, which is so busy with the names of princes, envenomed her most innocent follies. The scandal was so public even, that I remember hearing this couplet, composed by the Duchesse de Berri's coachman, sung by a cobbler of the Rue Richelieu; it is she herself who is assumed to be speaking:

"Quel plaisir d'avoir à mon âge
Eu tous les bergers du village!
C'est un pur abus
Que la constance,
Les derniers venus
Sont ceux qui dansent."

Without doubt, her behaviour with her father was often scandalously frivolous, and Louis XIV gravely reprimanded the latter, who should have had that amount of reason his daughter lacked; but neither of them deserved this horrible epigram of young Arouet, who never confesses the ill he does:

"Ce n'est pas le fils, c'est le père;
C'est la fille et non pas la mère;
A cela près tout est au mieux.
Ils ont déjà fait Étéocle,
Et s'il vient à perdre les yeux,
C'est le vrai sujet de Sophocle."

This was what was being said openly, and the Cabal of Sceaux encouraged, paid for, and spread abroad these infamies. Madame de Berri only laughed at them, and the Duc d'Orléans paid no attention.

"Do you want me," he said, "to increase my enemies' joy by taking their attacks to heart? They want to drive me to desperation, and are furious that they do not succeed."

"No, Monseigneur," I answered, "their aim is more perfidious; they hope, by these infamous stories, to alienate the respect and love of all from you."

"In that case, they will still fail again; those who know me will not be caught in such clumsy snares; I care little for the opinion of those who do not know me."

"You are wrong, Monseigneur; no opinion is safely to be despised; public opinion is formed of the mass of individual opinions."

"No father will ever believe in these atrocities."

For my part, whether I am a father or not, I should not believe even if I had seen the thing.

The most inexplicable caprices governed the liaisons which the Duchesse de Berri formed and broke with like facility. Her lovers of to-day did not resemble those of yesterday in the least; her preference was for foul faces rather than fair, common rather than noble. A dark lover succeeded to a fair one, a dullard to a man of wit, and love was gone as quickly as it had come. The one passion which, amidst a thousand infidelities, she maintained for nearly three years, has still the air of a caprice. It was one of the King's pages who inspired it, not one of those gallant, dainty pages such as are to be seen, but a long, lean, loutish fop with a most unprepossessing face. This purple-faced Adonis was named La Haye, a son of some peasant or apothecary like myself, but with nothing to redeem this disadvantage. The Duchess singled him out amongst a score of younger, more handsome and experienced lovers. She threw herself upon his mercy before he had taken a step to meet her, and, withal, his coldness only served to fan the Princess to a whiter heat. She addressed him glowing letters and amorous verse, which he scarcely read, if he read at all. This La Haye, who had all the conceit of stupidity, said one day, in Ravannes' presence:

"I spent two hours before my mirror, telling myself the Duchess's taste was not so bad."

"I will wager," retorted Ravannes, "that all the time you were blushing as usual."

Madame de Berri interested herself in his fortunes, and established him as her husband's squire; she attached him closer to her person, by entitling him her chamberlain; she made him sleep in a closet adjacent to her chamber, so jealous was she of

his claret-coloured face. The Duc de Berri, on his side, had always his beloved chamber-maid. Consequently, perfect peace reigned in the household.

The Duc de Berri was little concerned that the Duchess should enjoy all the liberty of a widow; he would even have permitted the scandal, if he had not connived at it; but ridicule penetrates the thickest hide; a jest is often more potent than reason. The Duc de Berri overheard a valet say to his comrade:

"M. de Berri will never be King."

"Why?" asked the other rogue.

"Because his wife has taken care to give him horns which will push the crown off his head."

It was a sally of the ante-chamber which could not be taken up. On another occasion, La Haye, either from insolence or inadvertence, forgot to raise his hat when passing in front of him.

"Monsieur," said the Prince, "which of us is the Duc de Berri?"

At last, as a climax to his grievances, he felt a certain conjugal longing; but his wife received him with her nails, and the marks of them were sooner gone than his rancour.

He was in this frame of mind when he found a letter written by his wife to La Haye, in which she urged him to incredibly foolish exploits. The Duc de Saint-Simon, his confidant and intimate at all seasons, seeing him so incensed against the Duchess, whom (I dare not suspect why) he was ever anxious to thwart, showed him other letters and verses in which the Court made merry at his expense. The Duc de Berri, who was easily moved and veered round to the least wind, issued suddenly from his indifference, and swore he would confine his wife in a convent, like the fathers of comedy. Full of this idea, which he thought was bound to succeed, he set off for Rambouillet, where the King was staying. La Haye, as his duty was, accompanied him, and the Duchesse de Berri, who was uncomfortable at her favourite's absence, arrived at Rambouillet almost at the same time. M. de Berri had changed his usual character, which was constrained, silent, and timidly dull. His most pressing need was to see the King, whom he encountered in the gardens with the Maintenon. He had come to the recital of his griefs, and was bringing out the incriminating letters, when Madame de Berri rushed in like a madcap.

"Monsieur," said the King to his grandson, "youth will have its fling; your wife will not always conduct herself thus, and, to my view, the most disastrous course would be a scandal. I will have no hand in it."

"Sire, Sire," cried Madame de Berri, "you, who are so courteous, deign to scold my husband for leaving Paris, with all his household, without informing me."

"Madame," said the Duc de Berri, "what have you to say about this letter?"

"That is certainly not addressed to you," she answered.

"Madame, you deserve . . ."

"Mon Dieu! let us leave our deserts and think of our diversions."

The Duc de Berri, choking with anger, seized a moment when the Duchess was pirouetting round the King, to give her a brutal kick, which sent her reeling into Madame de Maintenon's arms.

"Monsieur," cried the King, raising his cane, "you are shameless, and it is only out of self-respect that I do not treat you as you deserve."

"Berri," said the Duchess, weeping, "if I were a man you would not have behaved in such a cowardly way."

"Madame," replied the King, "he was begging me just now to shut you up in a convent; but it is he who shall go to a state-prison."

"Sire," said the Prince, "I am confused at my reprehensible outbreak of passion, and I beg you to pardon me."

"Address that prayer to Madame," said the King, "and submit in advance to the reparation she demands."

"Sire," said the Duchess, with a smile, "is it not just that I should exercise the right of retaliation?" Waiting for no reply, she effected her reprisals, which were gentle enough, having regard to the affront. "Kiss me, M. de Berri," she said, "and this time have no fear of my nails; in the daytime my paws are velvet."

Thus the reconciliation was patched up; but the Duc de Berri, urged on by the Maintenon against his wife and the Duc d'Orléans, promised himself to be avenged, when death overtook him, with a good confession for his only consolation.

Madame de Berri was warned that obstacles were being planned against her amours, and, perhaps, worse (for who knows to what extent a prince's vengeance will be carried?). She was

determined enough by nature to be afraid of none of his attempts against her; but she was frightened at the peril incurred by La Haye. She knew him to be of so timorous a stamp that she concealed her project until the last moment. She summoned him one night to her room, which he found full of boxes and preparations for a journey. She was dressed from tip to toe; he was not.

"La Haye," said she, "make haste, and let us be off."

"What talk is this of being off," he said, with a dazed air; "better go to bed."

"We are going to Holland."

"I!"

"You are running away with me."

"I am running away with you! And what for?"

"If you prefer it, I am running away with you!"

"What is the good of it, please?"

"I am uneasy about our future; the Duc de Berri wishes to be avenged on us both; he has underhand projects; I have foreseen everything; a carriage awaits us; in two days we shall be out of France."

"Good God! Madame, whatever may happen, I will be more prudent than you."

With these words, he made his escape, and shut himself up in his room, fearful of being forcibly abducted; three days later the Duchesse de Berri had ceased to think of her journey.

The Prince, her husband, lived on no worse terms with her, as far as appearances went, after the kicks which had been mutually exchanged; he frequently took her out hunting for whole days, which she spent on horseback, galloping with the huntsmen. On the 2nd of May 1714, the Duc de Berri was chasing the boar; his wife accompanied him; the heat on that day was enormous. Madame de Berri, suffering from fatigue, got into her carriage, which followed the hunt at a distance; she came across her husband, separated from his huntsmen and his suite.

"Have you anything to drink?" he asked.

"Yes," said she, "some ratafia of cherries that I have prepared myself; pay me the compliment of tasting it."

He drank greedily, and almost immediately complained of shivering. He was taken back to the château, where he was put to bed, and nursed in an exemplary manner by his wife. He

died in three days, disturbed in his mind at the recollection of the ratafia.

"It is written," said Louis XIV, with sorrowful resignation, "that I am to survive all my family!"

This death excited great consternation, and the Jansenists declared that the angel of death was waging war against the Constitution. The firm attitude of the Duc d'Orléans imposed silence on any fresh calumnies. He said to me one day, on leaving his chemical laboratory:

"I have just chanced to read again the Century of Nostradamus."

The first use the Duchesse de Berri made of her widowhood was to send away La Haye, loaded with money and honours.

Louis XIV had become steeled against misfortune after all his prosperity; Religion, or rather the Constitution, alone had power to break through his moral indifference; he had no longer eyes for anything on earth but Madame de Maintenon and Père Le Tellier. The death of the Duc de Berri produced no impression on him, except in so far as it recalled the memory of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, whom he never ceased to regret. He was seized with such gloom on this account, that Madame de Maintenon thought it incumbent on her to put an end to it.

"Sire," she said, "it is good and just to weep for the death of persons one has loved."

"What would you imply?" retorted Louis XIV, abruptly.

"Your despair, at the death of the second Dauphine has always seemed to me misplaced."

"Once more, what is it you would say?"

"That our affections like our dislikes are often deceived, and I recommend you not to feel this excessive regret for the Duchesse de Bourgogne."

"This is singular language from your lips."

"It is the language of truth, Sire, and these letters will prove to you that treachery may often have a charming exterior."

She gave the King a casket of letters, all in the Dauphine's handwriting, and containing the proofs of her treason with her father, the Duke of Savoy. Louis XIV read them with dumb sorrow, then destroyed them, lest anyone else should penetrate into these wretched family secrets. Madame de Maintenon was not satisfied with this; she confessed to the King all that she had

hitherto concealed from him concerning the Dauphine's irregular life.

"Alas!" cried His Majesty, weeping; "I see clearly that nothing is sure here below except the love of God!"

These revelations, so far from destroying his great grief, only added to it a sovereign contempt for all mankind.

The death of the Duc de Berri came near to profiting the Duc du Maine, who, perhaps, was no stranger to the causes of it. There remained only one Dauphin of the Royal family, and he so frail and feeble, and surrounded by plotters, that he seemed unlikely to reign. He had already been poisoned once, and the antidote, which saved him, left him with a black spot on the breast which never disappeared. They counted so little on this young life that the Court began to return to the Duc d'Orléans as heir-presumptive to the Crown. The King had married the Duc de Bourbon to Mademoiselle de Conti, and the Prince de Conti to Mademoiselle de Bourbon; he sought to renew his Court, which had been so rapidly mowed down; but these two couples, youthful still, were in sad contrast with the old age of the monarch, who alone survived his children and grandchildren. The Duc du Maine, assisted by the Maintenon and Père Le Tellier, won an easy triumph over the feebleness and indifference of the King, who, as early as 1710, had extended the prerogatives accorded to the bastards to their children, giving them precedence over all dukes and peers. This innovation had given rise to much murmuring; it was far worse when people came to hear of the advantages given to the bastards by a secret testament of the King. The Duc d'Orléans was forewarned by the Chancellor Voisin, and the Duc de Saint-Simon, of the existence of this testament and of its contents.

The Duc de Saint-Simon is a courtier pliant to the circumstance; he adopts all tones, all airs, all masks, all allures; thus the same day will see him mild and choleric, flattering and brutal, frank and false; for the rest, he is always mounted on his hobby-horse of genealogy, which is his one science. Of mortal sins he knows only a false title of nobility, or, which is all one to him, a title of yesterday. Speak to him of blazons, arms, and alliances, and you will see him display his knowledge in the matter of dates, anecdotes, and observations. It is his happiness, his life; you must see him unravel a pedigree, track it to its most obscure

origins, discover its foreign ramifications, what he calls the *creepers* round a genealogical tree; he loudly asserts that he is nobler by two quarterings than the King of France, and it is amazing to hear him discuss the degrees of kinsmanship between the foremost houses. Speak of the most indifferent object, he comes out with some escutcheon on a field gules or azure. Mention a town, a château, a shanty, he has always some Saint-Simon of yore in reserve whom he plants there like a standard. He had completely broken with Madame, who was as mad upon pedigrees as himself, and that because he had proved to her that the Palatines had more than once *degraded* themselves by alliances with daughters of the counts of the Empire.

"M. de Saint-Simon," she said, "is jealous of all nobility; if one were to believe him, there is no one except himself whose blood is pure and unmixed; I presume the little coxcomb does not remember that one of his cousins was groom to Madame de Schomberg."

Madame might have added that this groom had a brother whose fortunes were even meaner. As for Saint-Simon, he does not bog himself in explanations; out of a certain *Le Bossu*, a burgess and judge of Mayence, who married an heiress of the elder branch of his house, he makes, in a stroke of the pen, a most high and puissant personage of the house of Bossu. Even out of my name of *Dubois*, with a little good-will, he might do something. The hatred with which he honours me originated thus. I ventured to say to him jokingly:

"Do you think, M. le Duc, that our ancestors may not have been relations by marriage a thousand years ago?"

"Impossible, Monsieur," he answered, drily.

"Why not? My name may have changed on the way, like so many others." He flushed, and did not answer. "However," I added, "if it were permissible for a Cardinal to have legitimate children, I think you would not refuse an alliance between our two houses."

"I would consent to anything rather than undergo such dishonour."

"Plague! A dishonour that means more than a hundred thousand livres a year is not to be had for the asking, M. le Duc."

Since this discussion, he has treated me with as much contempt as though I had been a groom of Madame de Schomberg's. The

Duc de Saint-Simon did not consider he was contracting a misalliance in marrying a daughter of the Maréchal de Lorges, who is hideous, and in compensation most haughty; she makes it a boast that no one has ever conspired against her impregnable virtue. I thoroughly believe her. Of her two children, the daughter is monstrously ugly and insipid; that does not prevent her from having a pedigree which goes back to 980. The Duc has, at any rate, a human face. He is noticeable for a stiffness of carriage, which is extended to his manners and his mind; his eyes are deep-set and keen; his physiognomy is of marble; his speech is short, and his voice harsh. His style, on the contrary, is a model of prolixity and obscurity; whenever he writes a report, the Regent says to him constantly:

"M. de Saint-Simon, for mercy's sake, a full stop."

"All that I can do, Monseigneur, is to put in a colon or semi-colon."

"Your sentences," I said to him one day, "are like your pedigree; they have neither beginning nor end."

Notwithstanding, there are admirable qualities in his manner of writing, new and original expressions, words which bite. It is known that he is writing his memoirs, and he makes no secret of it; they are only known, however, by report.

"Tis naked truth I am releasing from her well," he said to me one day.

"Take care," I answered, "or truth will send you to the Bastille, and no one will release you."

"I am not afraid. These memoirs will not be published until after my death; they will cause a prodigious disturbance."

"Especially amongst the students of heraldry."

Saint-Simon, for all his exceeding ambition, had not yet succeeded in playing a great part; his Embassy to Spain did not bring him the notoriety he desired; his campaigns in Flanders had not distinguished him as a capable commander; Louis XIV looked upon him as the first *pedigree* in France. Saint-Simon, having been brought up with the Duc d'Orléans and the Duc du Maine, fluctuated between these two Princes, uncertain as to which destiny to follow. He needed much skill in order to drift from one to the other without quarrelling with both. The precedence over dukes and peers accorded to the children and descendants of the Duc du Maine inspired him with an aversion

for the latter Prince. None the less, when slander assailed the Duc d'Orléans, and he found himself deserted even by his creatures, he wavered more than ever, taking a step forward only to recede a pace. At last he came to a tardy decision, and declared himself on the side of the Duc d'Orléans, whose innocence he proclaimed, to the detriment of the Duc du Maine. When the Duc de Berri died, he hesitated again, remained neutral for some time, and then returned, with more heat than ever, to the Duc d'Orléans, having a presentiment that he would become Regent or King. I will wager that he would have cursed himself if the Regency had fallen to the Duc du Maine on the death of Louis XIV.

One night, Saint-Simon arrived in breathless haste at the Palais-Royal, and closeted himself privately with the Duc d'Orléans, who was undisturbed at these great pretensions to mystery, knowing the man to be essentially a comedian. But this time it was no comedy; on the same night, His Royal Highness related to me the details of their interview.

"Monseigneur," said Saint-Simon, "I have come to inform you of a piece of news which has transpired to-day, and which will greatly surprise you."

"What is it, pray, Monsieur?"

"The King has made his will."

"A will! From whom have you heard this?"

"From the first President, who holds the key of a safe hidden in the wall of a tower in the Palace, guarded by two iron doors, in which the will has been secreted. . . ."

"Full stops, M. de Simon! and we shall understand each other better."

"It is certain His Majesty has made his will, at the point of the dagger or the crucifix, for he said to Madame de Maintenon: 'I have been worried into making my will. I have purchased peace at this price; I know the impotence of the act, not to speak of its uselessness, for in life we can do all we will, but dead, we are less than the least of our subjects. What effect had the will of the King, my father, after his death? I knew this, but they would not have it. I had no peace or quiet until it was done. Therefore, Madame, what will be, will be; it is no longer my concern; I feel only regret for it.' The King said almost the same things to Messieurs de Mesmes and d'Aguesseau, when he gave it to them."

"This forebodes no good; but are you ignorant of the tenor of the will?"

"It is a serpent about to shed its skin; it must be torn in pieces, carefully, lest the head and tail be patched together again. The will concerns M. du Maine. The King said to him severely: 'It was your wish, Monsieur; but if, however great I may make you and you may be in my lifetime, you are nothing when I am gone, it is for you to maintain, if you can, what I have done for you; and God be on your side! After all, I do not count on it.'"

"There is no doubt that M. du Maine has been raised to my detriment? . . ."

"To the detriment of the great nobility of France!"

"Well, what is your advice?"

"If my advice has any weight, Monseigneur, I advise you to make sure of the chief noble houses, to win over the troops and the Parliament, and to hold yourself in readiness as though the King might die to-morrow."

"His term is drawing near; I know it from my experiments with the water-glass."

"Away with chemistry or magic, Monseigneur! Our gentlemen of the Parliament understand no jesting on such matters."

"Monsieur, you may depend on my gratitude sooner or later; in the meantime, accept my friendship."

The rumour of this will soon reached the public ear, and excited inexpressible consternation; all the slanders by which the Duc d'Orléans had been assailed, gave way to the liveliest interest; the injustice done him revolted every heart; there were murmurs against Louis XIV; the Duc du Maine was despised; people were excited against the Maintenon, that evil genius of Père Le Tellier. The Duc d'Orléans, in order to encourage himself to spare no effort to maintain his rights, constantly repeated to himself, as well as to his intimates: "I have the cause of my children to uphold!" Madame, whom he informed of his projects, far from dissuading him, excited him against the "old hag," the "little cripple," and the "petty pope." It was thus she designated the favourite, the bastard, and the confessor.

Following Saint-Simon's advice, the buttresses of the Constitution were called in to uphold the House of Orléans; the Cardinal de Noailles joyously entered into a league against the Cardinals de Bissy and De Rohan; the Jansenists made stout

array against the Jesuits. These latter were in ill odour with the Parliament, because Père Le Tellier had debarred the children of the Magistracy from the great benefices; it was his vengeance against them for a certain condemnation. . . . The Parliament threw itself into the league of His Royal Highness; the Duc de Guiche, Colonel of the French guard, won over the officers of that corps, which was then in Paris; other regiments were induced to a like defection. Saint-Simon arranged with the Dukes and Peers. It was necessary to negotiate and draw up a formal treaty. Conferences were held at the Palais-Royal and the Archiepiscopal Palace. Argenson, the lieutenant of police, entirely devoted to His Highness' service, shut his eyes to these secret and nocturnal assemblies, at which the Cardinal de Noailles assisted, with the President de Maisons, M. d'Aguesseau, procurer-general, M. Joly de Fleury, advocate-general, the Abbés de Fortia, Pucelles, Gaumont; the Ducs de Saint-Simon and De Guiche. Lord Stanhope, who chanced to be passing through Paris, was admitted, not without reason, to these councils, whither each member repaired by night through some of the houses adjoining the Palais-Royal. His part was to secure us the alliance of the King of England, in the event of His Royal Highness being compelled to have recourse to arms. In a short time the dispositions of the will became known.

Louis XIV, in his will, set down the form of government which he desired to see followed after his death; he established a Council of Regency, the members of which he nominated, and in which affairs were to be settled by a majority of voices; the Duc d'Orléans was declared head of this Council, without any other prerogative than that of the presidentship. This Council was to be composed of the Duc de Bourbon, when he should have completed his twenty-fourth year; of the Duc du Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, the Chancellor, the Maréchals de Villeroi, De Tallard, De Villars, and d'Harcourt; the four secretaries of state, and the controller-general. The young King was put under the guardianship and tutelage of the Council of Regency, and the Duc du Maine, as head and absolute commander of the King's household, had the charge of watching over his safety. A pretty guardian! Finally, the Duc de Villeroi was appointed his governor, Père Le Tellier his confessor, and Fleury his tutor.

The opposition will, which was drawn up at the Palais-Royal, was more careful of our interests. It was agreed, after ample deliberation, that the Duc d'Orléans should be declared Regent of the Kingdom, and that the King's person should be confided to him, as well as the general command of the troops and the distribution of all favours. This clause was inserted with a view to myself. We decided that the Cardinal de Noailles should be chief of the Council of Conscience; that the Président de Maisons, or, in his default, M. d'Aguesseau, should have the office of Chancellor; that M. Joly de Fleury should succeed M. d'Aguesseau as procurer-general; that the Abbés Fortia, Pucelles, and Gaumont should be honourably and lucratively employed; that in everything the Parliament should be consulted and heeded, and restored to its former privileges; finally, our Jansenists demanded that Père Le Tellier and his familiars, the Fathers Doucin and Germon, should be ignominiously expelled and exiled; that there should be no more talk of the *Constitution*, and that Port-Royal should be reconstructed. We agreed to everything, ready to refuse in due time and season. I was mighty careful not to reserve any petty share in the Regency for myself; I wanted a large one, and, thanks be to God, I have not missed it! The others, for the most part, had to be satisfied with promises.

Stanhope returned to London. The Duc d'Orléans, who knew me to be instinctively a diplomatist, ordered me to accompany him on a secret mission to George I. The Duc du Maine was so assured of the efficacy of the will, that he slumbered in his confidence, and refused to heed the warnings proffered him. However, as much attention had been given to the conduct of the Duc d'Orléans and his agents, I was prudent enough to disguise the nature of my journey, of which someone informed the King.

"Good!" said he, "the Abbé is going to see his English friends."

"His friends are not yours, Sire," retorted Tallard, who had never forgotten our Embassy.

I disarmed suspicion, however, by taking the road to Orléans, where I arrived at midnight, and descended at the house of the Chevalier de Longueville, a gentleman of the Duc d'Orléans; he received me with distinguished honour, and gave me that

which a weary traveller prefers before all things—a good supper and a good bed. I rose before day, and thanked Longueville for his hospitality.

"I like your house," said I, "for one has pleasant dreams in it; I myself dreamed that I was a Cardinal."

My sojourn in England was short and mysterious; I succeeded in serving my master beyond my hopes. King George received me favourably, and as the Regent's plenipotentiary. I will not repeat here what I have said of this negotiation in my Journal,* wherein I have included the documents and letters. Finally, in the course of this journey, I received for the last time the pension which I owed to English munificence. Subsequently, I ceased all private relations with that government. But I confess that so long as Louis XIV reigned, or rather the Maintenon, I looked upon this money as my due. Away with scruples! The secret of my return to France was not revealed, and when I descended at the Palais - Royal, I encountered Maréchal, pale and breathless. He whispered to me, shaking his head: "The King is lost!"

* It would seem from this passage and several others that Dubois wrote some political memoirs, of which no one appears to be cognisant. [*Editor's note.*]

END OF VOLUME I

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



0032253540

2 vols $\frac{N}{135}$

193

Mols
we/2

Power Bd

Ape w

This book is due two weeks from the last date stamped below, and if not returned at or before that time a fine of five cents a day will be incurred.

NOV 25 1933		
SEP 12 1935		
JAN 38		
29 MAR 38		
26 JAN 41		

944.033.9

D855

Dubois

1

Memoirs of Cardinal Dubois

2 NOV 25 1933



VOLUME 2

This book is due two weeks from the last date stamped
below, and if not returned

944.033.9 D855

Columbia University
in the City of New York

Library



Special Fund

Given anonymously

SECRET MEMOIRS OF THE
COURT OF FRANCE
DURING THE
XVIITH AND XVIIITH CENTURIES





MEMOIRS DU CARDINAL DUBOIS

PAR MONSIEUR LE DUC D'ORLEANS
REGENT DU ROYAUME



PAR MONSIEUR LE DUC D'ORLEANS

PAR MONSIEUR LE DUC D'ORLEANS
REGENT DU ROYAUME

MEMOIRS
OF
CARDINAL DUBOIS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY ERNEST DOWSON

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS
OF CARDINAL DUBOIS AND
THE DUC D'ORLÉANS



IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME TWO

LONDON
LEONARD SMITHERS & CO
5 OLD BOND STREET W
1899

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

CHAPTER XXVI	PAGE I
<p>The King's desperate Condition—His Presentiments—The Earl of Stairs—The Glass of Water—The Wager—The Cards—The Persian Ambassador—His Audience with the King—Madame d'Epainay—The Packing-Case—Dubois' Entreaties—Condition of the Court during the King's Illness—Fagon and the Duc du Maine—The Gangrene—The Century once more—Interview between the King and the Duc d'Orléans—The Iron Mask—Last Moments and Death of Louis XIV</p>	
CHAPTER XXVII	16
<p>Aspect of the Court after the Death of Louis XIV—The Duc du Maine and the Duc d'Orléans—The Poets and the Ante-Chamber—The Regent's Speech—The Parliament—The Reading of the Will—Concerning the madman Maranzac—The Sitting Resumed—The Duc du Maine's Reception at Sceaux—The Young Prince de Conti—The King's Funeral—First Consequences of the Regency</p>	
CHAPTER XXVIII	29
<p>The Letter of Madame—Explanations between Dubois and the Regent—His Nomination as Councillor of State—Madame at Saint-Cyr—Origin of Law's System—Portrait and Character of Law—His Projects—Dubois quarrels with the Marquis de Villars</p>	
CHAPTER XXIX	39
<p>The Chevalier de Saint-Georges—His Misfortunes—His Portrait—Negotiations with England—Letters from Dubois to Lord Stanhope—Dubois' Mission to The Hague—The Books and Pictures—Conferences—The Second Journey—Dubois in Hanover—George I—The King's Dinner—Robert Walpole—Dubois at The Hague</p>	

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXX	53
The Marquis de Châteauneuf; his foolish Traits—The Diamond Belt—The Snuff-Boxes—Madame de Châteauneuf—Dubois changes his Secretary—Letter to the Marquis de Nocé—Heinsius—Louvois' Insolence—Lord Cadogan—Robert Walpole—The Convention between France and England—Signing of the Triple Alliance—Letter from the King of England—Departure from The Hague—The Mysterious Warning—Return to the Palais-Royal	
CHAPTER XXXI	70
The Young King—His Portrait—Anecdotes of Madame Gordon—Massillon's Absence of Mind—His Nomination to the Bishopric of Clermont—The Visit of the Czar—His Interview with the Regent—His Visit to Madame de Maintenon—Peter I and Richelieu	
CHAPTER XXXII	85
Rumours of War—Alberoni criticised by Dubois—His Origins and Ministry—Dubois nominated Ambassador Extraordinary to England—His Grandson—The Young Man's Premature End—Dubois in London—Dubois' Illness—The Horse and the Mare—Dispatches—Dubois' Journey to Paris—His Return to England—English Politeness—Lord Stanhope sent to France—Signatures of the Quadruple Alliance—Dubois' Return to France	
CHAPTER XXXIII	100
Progress of Law's Bank—Company of the Occident—The Mississippi—M. de Crozat's Letter—Fontenelle and Lamothe—Suppression of the Councils of Regency—Dubois made Foreign Secretary—Lord Cragg's Letter—Absurd Suspicions	

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXXIV	106
Sinister Warnings—Dubois visits La Fillon—The Partition—Visit to d'Argenson—The Regent's Calmness—First Measures—Jean Buvat—The Regent surrounded by Cats—Letters of M. de Cellamare to Alberoni—The Regent's Blindness—The Conspiracy—Arrest of Cellamare—Declaration of War with Spain	
CHAPTER XXXV	127
The Duc d'Orléans' Obstinacy—Despotism of the Abbé Brigaut—Petty Causes of a Large Result—Arrest of the Duc du Maine—Ancenis—The Gallant Correspondence of Madame du Maine—Letter from the Cardinal de Polignac—Pompadour—The Regent in his Oratory—Arrest of the Duc de Richelieu—His Portrait—The Gaoler of the Iron Mask—The Regent at the Bastille—The Inscription—End of the Conspiracy	
CHAPTER XXXVI	155
The Regent's Ill-health—Portrait of Nocé and the <i>Rouls</i> —The Luxembourg—Philippics—Arouet de Voltaire—His Portrait and Character—Representation of <i>Œdipus</i> —The Abbey of Chelles—Extravagance of the Duchesse de Berri—Her Secret Marriage with Riom—The Toad's Head—Illness and Death of Madame de Berri	
CHAPTER XXXVII	177
Mdle. de Valois—Her Portrait, Amours, and History—The Grand-Duchess of Florence—Betrothal of Mdle. de Valois—Her Regrets—Her Journey to Modena—Mistresses of the Regent—Madame de Parabère—La Souris is carried off by Richelieu—Emilie: her Portrait—The Regent as <i>Were-Wolf</i> —Madame de Deffant	

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PAGE
200

Dubois' Mistress, Madame de Tencin—The Red Hat and the Archbishop—The Regent's Resistance—Letter from the King of England—Maroy's Expedition—The Archbishop's Wife—She visits Madame—Dubois' Polygamy—Epigrams against Dubois—His Ordination—Negotiations for the Red Hat—The Two Consecrations

CHAPTER XXXIX

227

The Mississippi Company—A Proclamation—Adventure of M. and Madame Quoniam—Ovation of Law—His Mistresses—Law's Coachman—*Lapsus Linguae*—Brutality of the Prince de Conti—Fall of the System—The Bank annulled—Edicts and Decrees—Threats of a Saint Bartholomew—Troubles in Paris—The People at the Palais-Royal—Leblanc's Presence of Mind—Law saved—Madame mistaken for Law—Law's Parliament—His Retreat six Leagues from Paris—Apoplexy of the Regent—Flight of Law

INDEX

259

MEMOIRS OF CARDINAL DUBOIS

CHAPTER XXVI

THE KING'S DESPERATE CONDITION—HIS PRESENTIMENTS—THE EARL OF STAIRS—THE GLASS OF WATER—THE WAGER—THE CARDS—THE PERSIAN AMBASSADOR—HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE KING—MADAME D'EPINAY—THE PACKING-CASE—DUBOIS' ENTREATIES—CONDITION OF THE COURT DURING THE KING'S ILLNESS—FAGON AND THE DUC DU MAINE—THE GANGRENE—THE CENTURY ONCE MORE—INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE KING AND THE DUC D'ORLÉANS—THE IRON MASK—LAST MOMENTS AND DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

IN spite of Maréchal's sinister prophecy, nothing had yet transpired as to the King's desperate condition. However, his gloom seemed like a presentiment of his approaching end, and it was visible from Fagon's air that medicine, having nothing further to do with Louis XIV, could already dispense with flattering him with vain hopes. This old rascal, who thought it an honour to be the chief lackey of Madame de Maintenon, seemed paid to kill Louis XIV. It was a sight to see him leaning on his cane, presiding, with his mocking smile, over the sudorific frictions given to the august patient. Baths and bloodletting completed the work. An old man was bound to succumb to treatment which even a young man might not have borne with impunity. Père Le Tellier was equally unmerciful towards the King's sick soul, which had so long been dieted on masses and acts of contrition. The Maintenon seemed grievously affected, not that she greatly regretted Louis XIV; but he was King, and with him what did she not lose?

It was the beginning of the month of August, and the King was no better. He was not blind to his condition, for he had said to Villeroi, who was speaking of his projects for the new year:

"Monsieur, apply to my successor."

II. A

"Sire, do not give way to these sombre ideas," replied the Maréchal.

"Tis not that which grieves me; but I tremble to think of what will happen when I am gone."

The Court was silently expectant of events. There were no more magnificent *fêtes* at Versailles, but aged faces, anxious, frigid, and severe. People accosted one another with inquiries as to the hour of mass, of the sermon, of the procession; there was talk of the Constitution also; no one thought of the danger in which the life of Louis XIV lay. The Duc d'Orléans invited the Earl of Stairs, the English ambassador, to his little suppers in the Palais-Royal. He presented me as his intimate confidant to this ambassador, who, from that time forward, remained my friend, in spite of our different nationalities. The Earl of Stairs, Commander of the Scotch troops, had been sent as ambassador to France by King George I. He was a statesman and a wit, and possessed a further quality, which is never out of place—he succeeded in all his undertakings. He well deserved his reputation in the army, and the famous Dutch engineer, Cohorn, was his first master. His gentle physiognomy has little character. I believe him to have the Scotch frankness, which consists in never dissimulating unnecessarily. He cuts a fine figure at a prince's table; his ease of manner is graceful, his conversation varied, and his tact exquisite. The English especially esteem his eloquence—I should say rather his fluent speech. He is a most accomplished diplomatist; and a better companion at table I have not found. Stanhope had already spoken of me to him, and he found me superior to the good and ill he had heard of me. We conversed at length upon England, he speaking French, I English. I sang the praises of his country. The women withdrew at dessert, and, delaying for a moment to follow them, we resumed the conversation more confidentially. The Duc d'Orléans' intentions in the matter of the King's will were revealed to him, as well as my mission to London. He entered warmly into all our plans.

"Milord," I said to him lightly, "Lord Stanhope has praised to me your skill in reading the future; would you be kind enough to give us a specimen of it?"

"What! Milord," interrupted the Prince; "you are one of us?"

"I am flattered, Monseigneur," he answered, "to have something in common with you. We have in Scotland seers who always know on the eve what will happen on the morrow. I am not a Scotchman in that respect, but I can say with truth that I am never deceived in the glass-of-water test."

"Would you be able to tell us exactly when the King will die?" I asked.

Without replying, he filled with water the largest glass he could find, embossed with the arms of the House of Orléans, and holding it up to the light, he cried, with a prophetic air:

"His Majesty will not see out the month of September."

"You are right," added His Highness, coldly.

"What, Monseigneur," cried I; "I am to be alone in wagering against Monsieur."

"A wager!" continued Lord Stairs; "with much pleasure, and for any sum you like."

"Two hundred guineas."

"You will infallibly lose," said the Prince, stopping me. "My experiments have led to the same result, and I am sure the King has not a fortnight to live."

"No matter," said I; "the wager holds good; it is strange to gamble on the life of a King of France."

"I will say more," added the Earl of Stairs, again examining his glass; "I affirm that in a month from to-day the King will be no more." We were then at the third of August.

"Since you are prepared to play the sorcerer," said I, with a laugh, "inform me of the date of my death, so that I may take the precaution of obtaining absolution."

"You are wrong, Abbé," said the Prince, shaking his head, "to trouble yourself with this kind of matters; you will be imposing a daily torment on yourself for the rest of your life. Believe me, once informed of what you had far better ignore, you will not die any the sooner or later for it."

The Earl of Stairs asked for cards, which he drew at random, without taking the trouble to combat my incredulity with words. When he had thoroughly questioned his familiar demon, he acquainted me with my destiny in these terms:

"You will die a cardinal and minister."

"If that is the case," retorted the Duc d'Orléans, "he runs a risk of living for ever."

"But how long do you give me to live?" I asked, without showing any surprise at his prediction.

"A year less than His Royal Highness," he said, counting on his fingers.

A glance from the Prince checked my indiscreet questions, and we were satisfied with the wager of two hundred guineas. The manner in which I lost it has often made me apprehensive of the completion of the prophecy concerning me. I am now a cardinal and a minister; it only remains for me to die a year before my pupil; which of us two is the most favoured?

It was known that on the 4th of August the King was to receive, at a public audience, the Persian ambassador, Mehemet Riga Beyd, who had been residing in Paris for some months. I had seen a glimpse of him at the Opera, and was curious to judge for myself whether, as was said, this sham ambassador was a snare set by Pontchartrain for the King's vanity. Doubtless he was afraid of someone being sent to Ispahan for information. But, according to my conviction, and the notes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I will answer that Mehemet was more of a Persian than we are; for the rest, he was a born adventurer, and played the part of ambassador for profit. The whole Court was duped, as was the King, who, I believe, had a medal struck to commemorate the homage rendered him by the King of Persia. Curiosity was stronger in me than the King's commands, and I repaired to Versailles in the Duc d'Orléans' suite. This piece of imprudence might have cost me dear, and I admit His Highness was opposed to it.

On the day of the audience Versailles seemed in all its former splendour; the gardens and apartments were full of the sound of persons coming and going; the young and the old Court displayed an extraordinary magnificence, and the ladies showed coquettish designs upon the heart of the ambassador, who was to embark from Havre the following month, after having spent all he had brought with him, and more than ten thousand louis given him by the King of France. His Majesty was seated on a throne at the end of the great gallery. The lustre of the Crown jewels, with which his robe was covered, accentuated his air of suffering and the pallor of his traits. Mehemet was a tall and handsome man, speaking little, and always smiling, at the King as well as at the lowest menials. His slightly bronzed skin, his

large black eyes, his hair and beard of a lustrous black, his athletic and withal elegant figure, attracted to him the ardent gazes of the haughtiest duchesses. He advanced awkwardly enough towards the dais, followed by his interpreter, and kissed the ground, according to the custom of his nation. The King begged him to rise, saying: "One kneels only before God."

The interpreter replied in the ambassador's name, "That kings were the sons of God, and His Majesty was His most perfect image."

I suspected from these flatteries that the poor ambassador had come to ask for money in order to return to Persia. He did not fail to do this, nor did he meet with a refusal. Père Le Tellier seized the opportunity to display his zeal:

"Mehemet Riga Beyd," he said boldly, "it would please both God and His Majesty if you were to become a Christian."

"No," replied the ambassador, to whom the interpreter submitted this incongruous proposition; "God alone is God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

"He does not understand the Constitution," murmured Madame de Maintenon.

The confessor, leaning over to the King's ear, spoke to him in low and eager tones.

"Mehemet," said Louis XIV, with a severe face, "do you know what they accuse you of?"

"Sublime Sophi," he answered, "if I am guilty, I consent to receive a hundred blows of the bastinado."

"They assure me," replied the King, "that you have made a married woman abjure Christianity in order to take her to Persia."

"Master, shut your heart and your ears to the serpents of slander, and serve me as a buckler against my enemies."

"In the meantime, to silence these rumours which distress me, I forbid you to take away any of my subjects, male or female, whether they consent or no."

"Your desires are the rudder of my conduct."

I should be at a loss were I to try and imitate the florid and symbolical language of the ambassador, whose falsehoods were disguised by brilliant externals. The fact of the apostasy was not, as I had thought at first, a device of Père Le Tellier. I knew intimately this Madame d'Épinay, who went to die in a Persian seraglio. She was a natural daughter of the little Abbé de

Grancey, was as shameless as her mother, and more determined than her father. I had married her more honestly than she deserved, and the ambassador, seduced by her natural plumpness, augmented it still more. She was delivered of a little Persian. Mehemet, in spite of his clumsy airs, had the wit to succeed. He eluded the command of the King, who had forbidden him to depart with any travelling companion, most ingeniously. He had Madame d'Epinaï packed in a case pierced with holes, and when they would have searched the case he begged them not to touch it, explaining that it contained the sacred books written by Mahomet himself, which would be profaned by Christian breath. They refrained from wounding his religious scruples, and the pregnant woman was thus able to leave France. I have been told that she became the favourite Sultana of the Sophi, after Mehemet had strangled himself, in his fear lest some one else should do it, on his return to Persia.

The audience being over, Louis XIV happened to pass the place where I stood; he seemed displeased at seeing me.

"Sire," I said, "I have prayed to God for the preservation of your precious health."

"Beware of doing so, M. l'Abbé," he replied, "the prayers of an impious man bring misfortune, and I should dread the effect of yours."

"Sire, I have been calumniated to your Majesty; that is the only reason which has given me the audacity to present myself here without your permission."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ pardoned his executioners on the cross; I pardon you also, Monsieur, and wish you life eternal. M. d'Orléans," he added, turning towards that Prince, "I pity you for having this man in your service."

With these words, harshly pronounced, he dragged himself to his apartments, where he lost consciousness. He was put to bed in a fever, and thenceforth I foresaw I had lost my wager. As for prayers, I left the care of them to others.

I had set foot again in Versailles with the secret intention of maintaining myself there, and during the King's illness I made frequent appearances in order to keep the Prince informed of what was passing. As the fatal moment approached, there were strange divisions amongst the courtiers; some rallied to the Duc du Maine and the will; others attached themselves to the Duc

d'Orléans; some to Père Le Tellier, who did not believe his disgrace was so imminent. The Duchesse du Maine had arrived in residence at the Château of Versailles; the Duc d'Orléans held his Court at the Palais-Royal, for the crowd's preference was directed towards him; the Maintenon, in order to be prepared for any event, removed to Saint-Cyr; I stationed myself in a post of observation at the top of the great staircase, and lent an ear to what was said, for and against; the lackeys were as keen over politics as other greater folk; the liveries were anxious to know who would be King. Alarms were disseminated as to the health of the Dauphin—which was no worse than before,—doubts as to the existence of the will, suspicions as to the cause of the King's illness, and hopes of the most conflicting nature. In short, everyone listened, went about, said his say, wept or laughed, according to his interest and his degree of attachment to the King. In the aspect of Paris, on the contrary, there was no change, and if people did not wish for the death of Louis XIV, they did not dread it. A reign of seventy-two years is a little long for the French people.

One day, being seated in a secluded corner of the gardens, I was meditating as to what I had to gain from this inevitable death, when I saw the Duc du Maine and the old cripple Fagon advancing towards me. I neither breathed nor stirred.

"Will it be long?" asked the Duc du Maine.

"A month at the most," replied Fagon.

"You do not think he can recover?"

"Only by a miracle, and though you may believe in miracles, I do not; the gangrene has already reached the legs."

"Are you sure it is gangrene?" interrupted the Duc du Maine.

"To save him one would have to give him a wooden leg like Scarron."

"Madame de Maintenon would not agree to that."

They retired, continuing their indecent jests; it was but two ungrateful men the more.

On the 26th, a mortal gangrene, as Fagon had foretold, set up in both legs at once; on that day the finest of the courtiers showed themselves at the Palais-Royal. The King was ignorant that it was gangrene; Maréchal, his favourite surgeon, told him of it, and made him submit to deep and painful incisions.

Maréchal perceived the uselessness of such a martyrdom, and stopped short, his eyes full of tears.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the King; "I do not like people to hide their faces from me and weep. The disease is incurable, I see; what is the good of these sufferings? Let me die in peace. How many days do you think I still have to live?"

"Until Wednesday next, Sire," said Maréchal, who could no longer conceal the truth from the King.

"Ah, well! Then I will hold myself in readiness for Wednesday. From this moment, I am no longer King."

These details, which were immediately repeated, reached me from every side; I conveyed them to the Duc d'Orléans, who asked me, with a distracted air, how I explained this line:

"When travellers come from Ormuz."

"It is all explained, like the rest," I answered.

"*Travellers* seems to me to point to the Persian ambassador, who came, actually, from Ormuz."

"That is as clear as possible."

His Royal Highness was informed that the King had sent for him. This was the second time; the first interview had passed coldly on either side; Louis XIV, being compelled to speak of the will, said airily to the Duc d'Orléans that he was treated in it in accordance with the rights of his birth. They separated with that constraint of speech which proves a mutual embarrassment. This second interview, which I will relate faithfully, as it was described to me by the Prince, was of no slight interest.

The Duc d'Orléans found the King alone, supported by pillows, and arranging papers in a casket. Even Madame de Maintenon was absent.

"Sire," said the Prince, "is your Majesty any better?"

"I am about to appear before God; that is why I have summoned you."

"Sire. . . ."

"Take a seat and listen to me. When I was King I had the misfortune to suspect you of nameless crimes. . . ."

"If you could have doubted my innocence, Sire, why did you not have me tried?"

"Time and tardy information has enlightened me; I know

you are innocent, and I pray you, by the merits of the divine Saviour, to excuse my deplorable error. . . ."

"Sire, I am too happy, since justice has been rendered me."

"The real culprits will be punished in this life or the next. I am grieved that I have made a will which I would not sign now, were it to be done over again; but this testament will meet with the same fate as that of my most honoured father."

"Sire, dare I venture to question you as to its provisions?"

"I tell you that they will not be executed; you need not therefore distress yourself. You alone will be the Regent of France, and I commend the little Dauphin to you, before God and before men."

At a movement of the King, his shirt flew open, and on his chest the Duc d'Orléans perceived a scapular.

"I wear it," said the King, "for the love of them; they have told me that this simple token kept away the tempter and calmed bodily pains: in fact, I feel at peace. The day before yesterday M. le Cardinal de Rohan gave me Communion and extreme unction; that gives courage. Madame de Montespan was quite wrong to be afraid of death; above all, do not talk about this scapular of the Jesuits."

"Sire, the Jesuits have done much harm to your kingdom."

"Père Le Tellier has over-much zeal; I have told him so, indeed, with regard to the Bull; contrive that he is not made the King's confessor."

"Sire, I will obey you in every point."

"Have you any idea of employing one of your servants, the Abbé Dubois, the most perverse of men?"

"I will do as you will with him; however, this Dubois has such ability that he might be made useful."

"First reform his conduct; and then send him abroad on some negotiation where intrigue and skill are needed. I advise you to make any sacrifices in order to maintain the Peace of Utrecht."

"I shall follow, Sire, the instructions you have given me."

"Love the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse as your brothers; have regard for all the Princes; your madcap Madame de Berri would be wise if she went into a convent—not the Carmelites, they are a pest that you would do well to uproot; preserve for Madame de Maintenon the respect which

you bore me when I was King: in losing me, she will lose more than you think."

"Sire, all hope is not extinct; the hand of God can do what men can not; you will live yet."

"I have a malady which nothing can heal—old age. It remains for me to confide to you a secret which is known to God and to three persons only. I will deposit it in your bosom in order that if it should come to the knowledge of any living person, you may silence him for ever."

"Sire, you are speaking of the Iron Mask?"

"Yes, my son; that was the greatest of my sins. I have abused my kingly power in order to punish a man, who was perhaps innocent, with a torture of forty years."

"And this man, Sire . . . ?"

"Jealousy and a treacherous flatterer blinded me; I thought the Queen guilty—the Queen, that angel upon earth, who rewarded me for my injustice by her virtues. . . . M. d'Orléans, this must never be repeated."

"Sire, do not tell me. . . ."

"It must be; a secret shared by three persons is a secret no longer, and it sufficiently concerns the honour of your own family that you should make it respected."

"And these three persons, Sire?"

"Madame de Maintenon, Lauzun, and Père Le Tellier. I had him tried, condemned; he was destined to perpetual imprisonment. The Queen succeeded in setting him at liberty; he escaped, but not swiftly enough to elude my vengeance. I wished for his blood; others encouraged me in this desire. The Queen implored me so strongly that I granted her his life. An iron mask, which never left him, concealed this unfortunate victim! Fouquet was thought to be dead . . ."

"Fouquet, Sire!"

"He died finally in the Bastille in 1706; his death did not console me."

Louis XIV burst into a torrent of tears; but all the efforts the Duc d'Orléans made to soothe him were unavailing; Louis XIV answered all with this refusal:

"Monsieur, I should offend God were I to say more on the subject to you. It is sufficient for you to know the real name of the man, in order to silence anyone who should divulge this secret of state."

The Duc d'Orléans would never have confided in me these death-bed confessions, had not accident rendered me master of the same secret. I have no doubt but that His Royal Highness, in these last interviews with the King, was initiated into a host of mysteries as dark as this one of the Iron Mask.

The hope of a sudden fortune attracted certain charlatans to present themselves before the King, who was already in his death agony. The first was an old man with a hermit's figure, sandals, a long beard, and an expression which would have terrified travellers had they met him in the woods. He pretended to have arrived from the Holy Land, expressly to perform a miracle; he refused obstinately to explain his method of cure except in the King's presence. All his power, he said, was derived from a phial containing two drops of blood gathered at the foot of the Saviour's cross. He showed no one his precious relic, which he was to employ after the imposition of hands. He was sent to Fagon, who had as little faith in relics as in miracles.

"Certainly, Father," he said to the anchorite, "you shall have permission to make the experiment you desire; but, beforehand, allow me to assure myself that your phial does not contain poison. . . ."

"Gracious Heaven, what an idea! I swear to you that unless the dying man be in a state of mortal sin . . ."

"I believe you; but, once more, give me your remedy."

The man of God, hoping to profit by his ruse, handed Fagon his bottle, fastened and sealed with the arms of Saint Peter.

"The devil!" said the doctor, "this is remarkably black blood!"

"Do not forget that this divine blood has been in that phial for sixteen centuries."

"The phial is certainly not so old, for it is like a church cruet."

Fagon, with ironical *sang-froid*, broke the bottle amid the cries of the mock hermit.

"Father," said he, as he picked up the pieces, "this is not the blood of God, but of the ink-pot."

It was, indeed, dried ink. Père Le Tellier was the first to be wrath at this innocent piece of trickery, and the fabricator of the Saint Grail spent two years in the prison of Saint-Pierre-en-Seine.

Another quack, styling himself a German doctor of the faculty of Leipzig, who was something of a chemist, and had experi-

mented with the Duc d'Orléans, came with a recommendation from Madame. He was sent from Madame de Maintenon to Père Le Tellier, thence to Fagon, to the Cardinal de Rohan, and to Maréchal. He met with nothing but insults and rebuffs on all sides. One treated him as a quack-doctor, another as a sorcerer, this one as a madman, the next as a knave. Maréchal, although convinced that the King had but a day to live, asked the German what were his hopes.

"I possess two elixirs," replied the latter. "The first will give the King an appetite; it is a week since he has taken any nourishment; the second will delay the progress of the gangrene, and, perhaps, stop it altogether."

"I have no faith in your remedies," said Maréchal, "but there is nothing to risk in attempting all."

The King consented to take the first elixir, the effect of which appeared to him marvellous. His appetite returned, and he ate as heartily as if he had been in good health. They began to believe him out of danger, and the gloom of the Duc du Maine seemed to confirm this news.

"Wait till to-morrow!" said Maréchal, with a gesture of doubt.

Meanwhile, the rumour of this momentary improvement received such credit that the poets, following the lead of the Court, composed verses of thanksgiving, and the Court returned in haste to the Château. The Duc d'Orléans, who had been beset with visits and premature congratulations, found himself almost alone on that and the following day; this desertion wounded him, and he promised not to forget it.

"If the King takes but one meal more," I said to him, "you will be abandoned altogether."

Madame de Maintenon, who had already retired to Saint-Cyr, returned in the company of hope; and Massillon said to me, with much ill-humour: "What a magnificent funeral oration I am missing!"

"We lose much more than you," I replied.

On the morrow, when the German appeared with his elixir for the gangrene, they shut the door in his face with a thousand insults and threats. The King, after a very restless night, had sent for his family, and they had assembled in tears round his pillow. The Princes and Princesses were all present with the exception of the Dowager Madame de Conti, Madame la

Princesse, and Madame de Vendôme, who feigned illness in order that they might not be present at the last moments of Louis XIV. Madame de Maintenon was noisily telling a rosary of big beads. The King had given his instructions to the Dauphin and the Duc d'Orléans: he perceived the Duc du Maine keeping aloof, and surreptitiously laughing.

"He to whom the care of the young King is entrusted," said he, in a grave voice, "must render account of his stewardship to God and to man. I beg you to watch over this orphan"; and his eyes grew moist. "My daughter," said he to the Duchesse d'Orléans, "do not abuse your position to vex your sisters; they will need protection after my death."

"Madame," he said, addressing the Duchesse du Maine, "obey your husband, who more than all else needs loyal and good counsel."

At that moment, Madame and the Maintenon were quarrelling with their eyes as though they would bite each other; Louis XIV, resuming his advice to his bastards, said: "Ladies, I recommend you above all to be united."

"Yes, Sire, I will obey you," replied Madame, imagining the admonition was addressed to herself and the Maintenon.

"Madame," said the King, "you think I said that to you; no, no, I know you are reasonable; it is to these Princesses I speak, who are not like you in that respect."

"Ah, Sire!" cried Madame, "spare me!"

"God has pardoned," he continued, "and Père Le Tellier, to whom I have confessed, has twice given me absolution; I am very sure that you, at any rate, will not forget me, Madame, for when I was King, I loved you tenderly, and you have as many virtues as others have vices."

"Madame," interrupted the Maintenon, red with anger, "go away, the King is too much moved by you; go away; this emotion is bad for him."

She led her outside, and said to her insinuatingly: "Do not think, Madame, that it is I who have opposed your interests with the King."

"Madame," she answered, sobbing, "there is no longer question of that." And she departed so suddenly that she tumbled over Fagon, who was coming out of the apartment.

"Ah, ah! Madame," said the malicious creature, "don't bring me to the ground."

"What is going on inside?" she asked.

"Death," said he; and he left her.

On the 1st of September, the gangrene having reached the heart, the King's death-struggle commenced amidst horrible sufferings.

"It seems to me," said he, "that a great revolution is operating within me."

"Sire," replied Fagon, "perhaps the crisis will be fortunate."

"No; my muscles are contracting and tightening. Is it Wednesday to-day, M. Maréchal?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Father," said Louis XIV, "a *De Profundis*, if you please."

The confessor fell on his knees before the bed, and the rest of the company imitated him; the King, with clasped hands, followed the prayers with his lips and spirit. Suddenly a sound of violent laughter was heard, which so dismayed those present that they ceased their prayers.

"Continue, I beg you," said the King, repressing a movement of anger, and letting two tears roll down his cheeks.

When the *De Profundis* was said, he sent M. de Villeroi to find out who had been laughing so heartily.

The latter returned in consternation.

"Well," said His Majesty, "have you asked M. du Maine to wait until I am dead before he indulges in the full extent of his joy?"

Madame de Maintenon, entering, interrupted this mild reproof; she noticed the dulled eyes of the dying man, and, for the first time, felt an unfeigned regret.

"Madame," said the King, "I thought dying had been harder."

The peals of laughter were resumed; the Maintenon turned pale; someone rose to impose silence on this untimely mirth, when Louis XIV, making an effort, feebly bade them pay no attention to it. "It is M. du Maine," he said, "although M. de Villeroi does not dare admit it; but, as I am about to die, I forgive him; if I were not dying, I should forgive him equally."

The sorrows of the servants found vent in sobs and moans; the priests were unceasing in their psalm-singing.

"Why do you weep for me?" said the King. "Did you think I was immortal?"

These were his last words. Madame de Maintenon was led away from the lugubrious scene, thanks to her old friend, Fagon. A convulsion of agony terminated the death-struggle; Maréchal laid his hand on the King's breast; the prayers ceased for a moment, and the cry of *The King is dead!* echoed through Versailles.

I was walking at that time in the gallery seeking news and observing faces. I had been a witness of the scandalous hilarity of the Duc du Maine, who was whispering to d'Antin. Massillon, who was as impatient as myself, did not leave the precincts of the royal chamber; he was seeking inspiration for his funeral oration.

"The King," he said to me, "sees his approaching end with firmness and admirable calm."

"Death is nothing," I replied, "to him who dies in public; it is still almost a royal act."

The sudden rumour of the King's death sent us into the room where he had just expired; it was full of prayerful priests, mourning servants; Fagon and Maréchal were examining the corpse, the features of which were irrecongnisable, and which seemed to me shrunken.

"You see," said Fagon, "the elixir given to His Majesty was a poison."

"Would it not be better to attribute it to the disease?" replied Maréchal.

"In no other way," said Fagon, "can you explain these terrible ravages; the body has shrunk by the height of a head."

There was a moment's silence, which Massillon took advantage of to advance majestically towards all that was left of Louis the Great. The gaze of all was directed upon him; he raised his arms to Heaven, fixed his eyes upon the deceased in profound meditation, and said in a sonorous voice: "God alone is great, my brethren!" It were impossible to describe the terror which these sublime words produced; I felt a shudder run through my marrow; many of those present fell upon their faces. Thus did Massillon commence his funeral oration over Louis XIV; but that inanimate and disfigured body was as little like a catafalque gleaming with gold and light, as those words, *God alone is great!* were greater than eloquence.

CHAPTER XXVII

ASPECT OF THE COURT AFTER THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV—THE DUC DU MAINE AND THE DUC D'ORLÉANS—THE POETS AND THE ANTE-CHAMBER—THE REGENT'S SPEECH—THE PARLIAMENT—THE READING OF THE WILL—CONCERNING THE MADMAN, MARANZAC—THE SITTING RESUMED—THE DUC DU MAINE'S RECEPTION AT SCEAUX—THE YOUNG PRINCE DE CONTI—THE KING'S FUNERAL—FIRST CONSEQUENCES OF THE REGENCY

THE death of Louis XIV shed a spirit of restlessness and indecision over the courtiers, which lasted all the day. There was naught save condolences and congratulations. The Maintenon was beset with weeping ladies until she left for Saint-Cyr, praying for her dear Duc du Maine. Père Le Tellier was in close council with his first chaplain, the reverend Père Doucin; the royal family was in affliction, or feigned to be so out of decency; the young King was abandoned to Madame de Ventadour, who let no one approach him; the Duc d'Orléans and the Duc du Maine were gathering together all their partisans; the gentlemen of the robe and the gentlemen of the sword, the lesser and the greater nobles—all were in a bustle about Versailles. In Paris, on the contrary, wherever indifference was not manifested, joy was openly displayed. Had Louis XIV but died twenty years earlier they would have said of him, as the hunchback Fagon said of the Maintenon: "What displeases me in Christianity is that I cannot raise a temple and an altar for her adoration."

It was a sight to see the courtiers oscillating between the Duc du Maine and the Duc d'Orléans. Every one accosted one another with the question: "Who will be Regent?"

The most absurd and contradictory rumours were circulated. All who were thought likely to play a part in the Regency were caressed and fêted. M. de Villeroi went into hiding in order to escape importunities. I myself met with nothing but pleasant faces, respectful salutations and hand-grips; on that day

I had more than three hundred friends. There is no stranger harlequinade than an interregnum. The Duc d'Orléans soon had some of the most determined partisans of the Duc du Maine on his side, for it was stated openly that the Parliament would not admit the King's will, and that M. de Guiches had received a hundred thousand francs in order to win over the troops to the Duc d'Orléans. In the evening these rumours had acquired a consistency which seriously alarmed the partisans of the Duc du Maine, who was forced to notice their defection.

M. du Maine, uneasy, and already cringing, went to meet the Duc d'Orléans with increased politeness.

"Tell me, cousin," said he, "what is the last thing they are saying?"

"It matters very little what is said; I pay no attention to it."

"Doubtless; but it seems they have got scent of the late King's will."

"I neither know, nor wish to know; it will be time to-morrow."

"Certainly; but as it is not unlikely that His Majesty has remembered I was his son . . ."

"I have no knowledge, I tell you, of what has been done or will be done."

He left him abruptly to swallow his mortification.

Madame du Maine, to whom the incident was related, was no less irritated than her husband. She said to him herself:

"Monsieur, I do not know an idiot in the world capable of such a piece of folly. Your part was to compel the Duc d'Orléans to speak frankly, even if you had to set him the example. I am not used to all these petty concealments; you would have made a beautiful woman, if only you had a little beauty."

The Duc d'Orléans had returned to Paris. The evening, the night, was spent in preparations and conferences, at which the Earl of Stairs, as the representative of his government, assisted. As for me, I was the fly on the cart-wheel, but, withal, of greater use. Already I saw myself a personage. The Prince, however, paid no heed to my zealous endeavours. The morrow was expected with general impatience. The Parliament was to assemble to witness the opening of the will. In the morning printed placards were found on the doors of the churches; these

were attributed to me, but I was totally ignorant of them. It was a circular thus conceived :

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—Your presence is requested at the funeral and burial of the Dame Constitution, natural daughter of Pope Clement XI, which will take place in the Jesuit Church, Rue Saint-Antoine. The Archbishop of Bordeaux will officiate; the Reverend Fathers Le Tellier and Doucin will be chief mourners, and the Curé of Saint-Mederic will pronounce the funeral oration. R.I.P."

It was the Jansenists' innocent revenge. Satire flies on wings in Paris; for Manet came to my room humming the famous refrain, new at that time:

"Il est donc mort ce grand barbon,
Regretté de La Maintenon,
De Le Tellier et de Fagon."

"Who taught you such pretty things, rogue?" I asked.

"M. de Fontenelle's lackey, M. l'Abbé."

"The devil he did! Poets are like crows which attack the dead."

I dressed myself as gallantly as possible, and hastened to the Palais-Royal. As I crossed the ante-chambers, there was an onrush of the poets of the Café Laurent, who very near tore my coat to pieces:

"M. l'Abbé, speak for me."

"Protect me."

"My poem."

"My odes."

"Obtain a continuation of my pension."

I escaped from these frogs of Parnassus, saying:

"Gentlemen, the Regent has mighty need of poets and verses to-day; send in your works and petitions, they shall be examined."

Hence the indignation of the Muses with me, and the flood of songs and epigrams which assailed me. However, I laugh at them. Fontenelle, who stood out conspicuous from this rhyming herd, had a wit as apt for all circumstances as any professional courtier. He accosted me less cavalierly than was his wont:

"M. Dubois," said he, "I congratulate you on your new fortune."

"I accept your congratulations, my dear Monsieur, in my quality of first minister."

"In that case, you will see me at your Excellency's feet."

"I shall not leave you there."

After a formal salute, by way of peroration, I went to the Regent, who seemed to me to have a larger entourage than usual. He had just prepared his speech to the Parliament. This time I made the first advances, and begged him to acquaint me with the result of his labours. He read me this singular utterance, the original of which I have preserved as a monument of the most complete lack of tact. It ran as follows:

"Gentlemen, Louis XIV is dead; his great-grandson Louis XV succeeds him as the next heir to the Crown; I alone, premier Prince of the Blood, have the absolute right to the Regency: I beg you to sanction it; any opposing testament is annulled by this fact. I have already assumed the rank which is my due, relying on the alliance of England, on the suffrages of the troops and those of the Parliament, which you will not refuse me."

He had got thus far with this masterpiece, when I stopped him on the brink of the precipice.

"What are you about, Monseigneur?" I cried. "You are simply giving away the victory to the Duc du Maine."

"Do you expect me to fall on my knees before these people, Abbé?"

"No, Monseigneur, but there are ways of gilding the pill; remember the Du Maines and their partisans will be at this meeting."

"I shall be there too, with the Dukes and Peers, and the regiment of guards; for I am resolved to leave nothing undone in order to maintain my prerogatives."

"Indisputably; but it is better worth while conciliating those who may be useful to you; by an eloquent speech I understand a speech which drives home, is frank, but, above all, adroit."

"I consent to that; be my Demosthenes; tell me all there is to be said and how to say it."

I took up my pen and wrote from inspiration the speech which the Duc d'Orléans recited from memory. He admitted, after having read it, that I was still his master, and made an appointment with me at the sitting of the Parliament.

People were sure of the issue. D'Argenson, who was in the Duc d'Orléans' pay, had put the police at his disposal; officers and soldiers of the watch were patrolling the streets of Paris since

the morning. The Duc de Guiches, paid, as I have said, lined all the approaches to the Palais-Royal with the regiment of guards; Renold, Colonel of the Swiss, had posted his regiment in the vicinity of the meeting-house; Philaire, Colonel of the Artillery, had, during the night, concealed cannon in the neighbouring houses. In the hall, officers in disguise, with arms beneath their cloaks, kept ready for the first signal. The populace was hedged in at some distance from the Palais-Royal. The Dukes and Peers, all the chambers, the household of the Duc d'Orléans and that of the Duc du Maine, assembled at noon, amidst a profound silence, which expressed the general uncertainty of their minds. His Royal Highness rode on horseback as far as the great staircase; he had a smile for everybody, and his gracious manners, his noble and open expression, prepossessed in his favour. The Duc du Maine feigned a satisfaction he was far from feeling. Monsieur le Duc and M. de Toulouse drew near his Royal Highness with a sort of affectation. Bishops, priests, ambassadors were present in the assembly; the English ambassador occupied one of the stalls. His presence surprised, and was the cause of some murmurs round the Duc du Maine.

"What is the matter, M. d'Orléans?" asked the bastard, somewhat disconcerted; "at such an array of swords, one would seem to have returned to the days of the League or the Fronde."

"Monsieur," replied His Royal Highness, "I have commanded some troops to be present to preserve order and the liberty of the Parliament."

"I was about to reproach you with the contrary; but, since it is your wish, I am satisfied."

There was a low murmur amongst the Dukes and Peers, because the Duc du Maine had passed them without saluting. It was asserted even that M. de Saint-Simon had been heard to say: "Nevertheless, none of us are bastards." This sally would be the less surprising to me, in that he was on the side of the Duc d'Orléans and the privileges. M. d'Orléans displayed much emotion as he rose and began in these terms:

"Gentlemen, after the misfortunes which have overwhelmed France, and the loss of a great King which we have just sustained, he whom God has given us is our one hope; 'tis to him, Messieurs, that we now owe our homage and faithful obedience; it is I, the first of his subjects, who must set the example of

inviolable fidelity towards his person, of an attachment even closer than others to the interests of his state.

"These sentiments of mine, known to the late King, doubtless secured me the words full of kindness, which he addressed to me in his last moments, and of which I think it right to give you an account.

"After having received the Viaticum, he summoned me, and said:

"*'My nephew, I have made a will in which I have preserved to you all the rights your birth gives you; I recommend the Dauphin to you. . . .'*"

"That he may die of poison like the other princes!" cried a voice from the top of the hall. These words caused a momentary consternation; the Duc d'Orléans turned pale, and came to a stop. The indignation of the nobility almost flamed out; the first president restrained it with a gesture. Search was made in vain to discover the insolent interrupter. His Royal Highness resumed in a firmer voice:

"*'Serve him as faithfully as you have served me, and labour to preserve his kingdom; if you should lose him, you are the master, and the crown belongs to you.'*"

There was the sound of another energetic exclamation, accompanied by a roar of laughter; again the author of this indecent conduct was undiscovered. His Royal Highness feigned not to heed the interruption.

"To these words the King, my uncle, added others, which are too complimentary for me to repeat. He ended by saying to me:

"*'I have made the provisions which seemed to me the wisest; but as one cannot foresee everything, if there is aught which is unsatisfactory, it is to be changed.'*"

"These were his actual words."

"Monsieur," interrupted the Duc du Maine, "you were doubtless sole witness of this interview."

"Everyone is aware, Monsieur," replied the Duc d'Orléans, "that the late King summoned me several times during his illness, and spoke with me in private. I have religiously repeated what he said to me. Gentlemen, to resume:

"I am persuaded, therefore, that in accordance with the laws of the kingdom, and the precedents which have arisen in similar circumstances, and even the intentions of the late King, the Regency is mine; but I should not be satisfied if, to these many

titles which speak in my favour, you did not add your suffrage and approval, by which I shall feel no less flattered than by the Regency itself. I ask you then, when you have read the testament which the late King has committed to your hands, and the codicil I bring you, not to forget my divers titles, and to deliberate equally upon both—namely, upon the right which my birth gives me and that which may be added to it by the will. I am even convinced that you will think fit to commence by deliberating upon the former.”

“Gentlemen,” interrupted the Duc du Maine once more, “you will rather consult your duty. The will of the late King has quite another authority than that they seek to give to it. It was dictated to my most honoured father by interests of State. I have no doubt but that you will accept it in its entirety.”

“Monsieur, you will speak in your turn,” cried His Royal Highness, in an imperious voice; and he resumed the thread of his discourse with an air of marked displeasure:

“But, whatever be the title which gives me the right to hope for the Regency, I venture to assure you, gentlemen, that I shall merit it by my zeal for the King’s service and my love for the public welfare, especially if I am aided by your counsels and prudent warnings. I ask you for these in advance, protesting before this august assembly that I have no other designs save to relieve the people, to restore order to the finances, retrench superfluous expenditure, to maintain peace at home and abroad, to establish, in particular, the union and tranquillity of the Church, and, in short, to labour to the utmost of my power to promote the happiness of the State. All that I ask now, gentlemen, is for the King’s people to give judgment on the propositions I have just made, and that you deliberate, as soon as the will has been read, upon my titles to the Regency, beginning with the first—namely, that which I derive from my birth and the laws of the kingdom.”

M. du Maine, his face red, said, with a stammer: “Gentlemen, to that I will reply with the will, which I beg you to open.”

A deputation was sent to fetch the will from its hiding-place. The Duc d’Orléans seemed the calmest of all those present.

“Monseigneur,” said I, “this is the decisive moment; have you any orders to give me?”

“Yes,” he answered. “Try and effect a diversion which will render the Duc du Maine’s protestations null.”

Uncertain as to what I should do, I rose from my place and went to rejoin the Duc de Guiches, whom I saw in the low stall by the chimney. I informed him of the Regent’s idea, and we considered how to execute it. Whilst a councillor read out the will in a voice so feeble that the most attentive could barely hear it, the bastards, the Maintenon, Père Le Tellier, the household of Saint-Cyr, the Council of Regency, created a tumult which the ushers could not quell, when it was averred that the Duc d’Orléans was sacrificed to the grandeur of the Duc du Maine; Saint-Simon so excited the Dukes and Peers that they broke out in murmurs; the hubbub lasted all through the reading, after which, the noise ceasing, M. du Maine wished to speak:

“Gentlemen,” said he, “it was not without reason that the late King nominated a council of Regency of which M. d’Orléans is head; he has not disdained to select himself his most faithful servants. Far from my disputing the Regency with the premier Prince of the Blood . . .”

The Duc de Guiches had pointed out to me Maranzac, Monseigneur’s fool, gravely seated in the same stall with the Earl of Stairs; I could have wished to have had him by me, and employ him to create some absurd incident. Maranzac served me beyond my hopes. I saw him rise with a thousand apish gestures, and cry to the scarlet gowns:

“Gentlemen, your embarrassment touches me nearly; if it is an unimpeachable Regent you want, behold me; I will do whatever you like.”

The jester could have done nothing better, if I had primed him myself. There was a laugh at the sally, which seemed like a reflection on the Duc du Maine; people looked round to see whence it proceeded, and the laugh became universal. Only M. du Maine bit his lip and was silent. Maranzac was taken off to prison, and claimed a moment after by his patroness, Madame la Duchesse the elder.

Immediately, by a general, spontaneous, and thunderous acclamation, the Duc d’Orléans was declared Regent, and the will annulled. There remained a codicil to be fought, making the Duc du Maine master of the King’s civil and military household.

“Monseigneur,” I said in a low voice to the Duc d’Orléans, “they will not dare give M. du Maine too many rebuffs all at once; adjourn the sitting, in order to prepare your friends and partisans.”

"Gentlemen," said his Royal Highness, following my advice, "let me ask you to adjourn the sitting until after dinner."

The Parliament agreed; the assembly dispersed, but the troops remained at their posts.

The Parliament reassembled in the afternoon; the Regent's partisans were encouraged by their first success, those of the Duc du Maine were cast down. That Prince, pale and furious, listened to the whole debate without taking part in it. He put no obstacle in the way of the Duc d'Orléans' triumph, and left before the end of the sitting. All the advantages secured to him by the dead King were reduced to the superintendence of the young King's education; the sovereign power remained with the Duc d'Orléans, who was charged with the choice of a Council of Conscience and a confessor for his royal ward. He also unfolded his project of creating several special councils, which should aid him to support the weight of the Regency. He was escorted back to the Palais-Royal amidst unanimous applause.

I am told that the Duc du Maine, on his return to Sceaux, met with a quite other reception from his wife. The Duchesse, surrounded by her accustomed Court, was awaiting the result of the sitting of the Parliament with haughty tranquillity; they were intoxicating her with flattery to the extent of calling her *Madame la Régente*. When she saw the Duc du Maine arrive all sighs and silence, she suspected what had happened.

"Well, M. du Maine," she said; severely, "what has taken place?"

"The King's will is ignored, repudiated, annulled. . . ."

"And you endured this, Monsieur?"

"What would you have me do, Madame? I was surrounded by swords, pistols, and even cannon."

"It were better never to return than to return dishonoured."

"What good would it be, pray, to get myself killed by the Orléans faction?"

"You are a coward, Monsieur; if I had been in your place, I would not have given up the Regency so cheaply. Leave my presence, or my indignation may carry me to excesses which will dishonour us both."

She uttered these last words in a voice so changed, and with so resolute a gesture, that the Duc du Maine hobbled away much put out of countenance.

"Madame," said the youthful Arouet, who chanced to be present at this conjugal scene, "are you not absolute Regent in your married relations?"

"Madame," went on Vergier, the writer of tales, "everything would be for the best if the Duc du Maine could bestow a few of his qualities on you, or you a few of yours on him."

"You will see," said the Duchesse, "I shall have to conspire for him."

Meanwhile, since the death of Louis XIV, who was not yet buried, indifference changed to joy; all hopes were directed towards the Regency, which promised wonders, and, as the custom is, the past was decried in favour of the present; the grossest songs defamed the great King's memory; the Maintenon sought oblivion at Saint-Cyr; Père Le Tellier had just been exiled to Amiens; the Duc du Maine remained peaceably amongst the delights of Sceaux; the former Court was almost entirely renovated; it set the example of ingratitude whilst the body of the deceased King was still reigning in Versailles; nor did the people exercise more restraint when the rumour spread that the Regent was retrenching more than sixty millions of unnecessary expenditure. As for myself, never having had reason to be grateful for the bounties of Louis XIV, it was not a loss which grieved me overmuch. The Royal family, with the exception of Madame, were as little afflicted, whilst the Prince de Conti, on the eve of the funeral, scandalised Paris by his regardless behaviour.

Louis Armand, Prince de Conti, is deformed, as are so many of the Princes of the Royal family. He might be Scarron, with his face, which is not so hideous as his figure; his mocking laugh, his apish airs are profoundly disagreeable to me; he cannot keep steady on his legs on account of his hump, which grows more prominent day by day, like his belly; it often happens that he falls with his nose upon his cane; this was so customary at the late King's Court that, at the least noise, the people cried: "It is only the Prince de Conti tumbling down." I believe he has wit apart from his malignity; his prodigious absent-mindedness, however, gives him the air of a lunatic. On the day after the King's death he asked everyone he met: "Will the King receive to-day?" They did not answer him, thinking he jested; at last, someone ventured to tell him that the King was dead

and embalmed. "Tis true," he replied, "he is going hunting to-morrow." His whims are sometimes dangerous, it being his pleasure to hurt; at bottom he loves his wife, whom he torments in a thousand ways. He always keeps loaded pistols at his bedside, and of nights he awakes the Princesse de Conti, with the words: "Madame, I must kill you!" He threatens her with his arms, to the great terror of the poor lady; in the morning she swears she will sleep apart, but, sword in hand, he forces her to lie with him. The Dowager-Princesse de Conti, however, loves the little monster to the point of being jealous of her daughter-in-law, with whom she wages perpetual war, breathing fire and flames at the least pretext for a quarrel. Ten years ago the Dowager-Princess began building a house, which will not be finished in a century. When she is on good terms with her son, the work is suspended; they are recommenced and the number of workmen doubled, immediately they fall out. "I shall leave," she says, "and go and live far away from you." Someone has said that by an inspection of this building you can tell the terms upon which the Prince de Conti and his mother are living.

The Prince de Conti liked to frequent the vilest company, not out of libertinage, but so that he might have poor creatures to torture. He went by preference to the Morival, the well-known procuress, who found him victims submissive to kicks and pin-pricks, and a thousand other hellish inventions. One poor girl issued from his hands all bleeding and unconscious; the Morival took the part of this wretched creature, and her vengeance was in a scurvy disease which the Prince de Conti caught in her house. When the surgeon, Castel, had told him its nature, he burst out in a fury, and swore by the devil, his patron, he would have justice for this discourtesy. His deformities were enhanced, and his cure was a lengthy one. He dissimulated so well that the Morival was astonished not to have had news of him,—a *lettre-de-cachet* for Fort-l'Evêque. Finally, on the day before the late King's interment, the Prince, having recovered, put his project into execution. The Morival was arrested in bed in the early morning, garroted in her chemise, set upon a scurvy ass, and led to the sound of a trumpet through the streets of Paris. The crowd followed with hoots and shouts of laughter; and a knave of a lackey, who held the ass's bridal, cried, like a herald-at-arms: "This is the triumph of the Morival,

famous procuress of the good city of Paris!" The Regent was informed of this brutality; he severely reprimanded the Prince de Conti, who answered, with a shrug: "I should like to have seen you there, Monseigneur!"

The King's body was embalmed, his heart and bowels separately; the body was transported to the vaults of Saint-Denis. The ceremony was accompanied by the most odious profanity; one would have thought that wretches had been suborned to insult the bier of a King of France. The procession had been arranged with parsimonious magnificence; priests were almost entirely lacking, whether because they had not been invited, or that the Cardinal de Noailles had dispensed them from rendering the last duties to Père Le Tellier's penitent. A portion of the Court absented itself under the most frivolous pretexts; those who owed most to the late King did not come. The day was hot to suffocation, and it was beautifully fine. The crowd poured in from afar to see the pomp of the obsequies; but the last comers, led away by the example of the others, instead of silent attention, manifested the noisiest gaiety. The whole of the road from Paris to Saint-Denis was lined with tents, stalls, and wine-booths. People were eating, drinking, and laughing. The troops who formed the escort had their work cut out to open a road for the funeral car, which moved slowly on through a tumult of voices, insults, songs, and shouts. There was a moment, before reaching Saint-Denis, when furious hands would have torn in pieces the mortal remains of a King who had reigned seventy-two years, more than forty of which, thanks to his ministers, had been glorious. To disperse this flood of people, the prayers and offices were hurried through. The Regent had seemed ill at ease amidst these indecencies.

"Monseigneur," I said to him, "the people is a cowardly and savage beast; it fastens upon corpses."

On the morrow the following two lines were found written upon the tomb in which Louis XIV reposes:—

EPITAPH OF LOUIS

"A Saint-Denis comme à Versailles,
Il est sans coeur et sans entrailles."*

M. de Saint-Simon said, in his indignation against these out-

* At Saint-Denis, as at Versailles, he is without heart and without bowels.

rages upon the ashes of the dead: "I did not know the Carnival came in September." The fury of the people did not stop at this much; several statues of Louis XIV were mutilated during the night, others insulted; a placard was stuck up in the Place des Victoires: "Tyrant of bronze; he was ever so."

Satirists and libellers flung themselves on the renown of this King, whom they had all flattered, and for a month it was a struggle as to who should say most ill of him.

"Ah, well!" said the Duc d'Orléans to me one day, "I am worshipped and extolled to-day by the very same men who will hate and insult me after my death."

The *débuts* of the Regency were startling. It seems to me, however, that I had little share in them, for the Duc d'Orléans suddenly dispensed with me at his Councils, although I could never fathom the motives for this disgrace, which lasted until the end of the year. I found myself dismissed from the Palais-Royal, neglected by the Prince and by all; the shower of favours fell upon everybody except me, and I perceived that my presence had become insupportable to the Regent. I supposed that the satirical "addresses" of the Court had been maliciously attributed to me: for instance, the Duc d'Orléans found himself lodging "*At the Sign of Goodman Lot, Rue Jean-Pain-Mollet*"; Madame de Berri, "*at the Well of Love, Rue de la Truanderie*"; Madame de Nesle, "*at the Bawd's Head, Rue du Hasard*." In fine, I was in despair to see the Regency turning to the advantage of men less able than myself. I was not rebuffed, however; I still went to pay my court to the Regent; I frequented the Palais-Royal, observing, listening, and making myself respected by my enemies. The Parliament was invested with the largest powers; the Gallican Church had triumphed over the Constitution; the princes, the great nobles, were satisfied; I alone was not. I was not even a member of any of the various Councils which had been formed, whose chiefs were in communication with the Council of Regency, composed of the Duc du Bourbon, the Comte de Toulouse, the Duc du Maine, the Chancellor, the Duc de Saint-Simon, the Maréchaux de Villeroi, d'Harcourt, de Bezons, and the Marquis de Torcy. The Abbé Dubois was forgotten.

"Oh, the ingratitude of princes!" I kept repeating to all who would hear me.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LETTER OF MADAME—EXPLANATIONS BETWEEN DUBOIS AND THE REGENT—HIS NOMINATION AS COUNCILLOR OF STATE—MADAME AT SAINT-CYR—ORIGIN OF LAW'S SYSTEM—PORTRAIT AND CHARACTER OF LAW—HIS PROJECTS—DUBOIS QUARRELS WITH THE MARQUIS DE VILLARS

A DISCOVERY which I made on the 31st of December revealed to me the causes of the Regent's neglect. I had stolen one morning into the cabinet of His Royal Highness before he had arrived. I began to shift the papers, in order to know what was passing. A letter came into my hands; I recognised Madame's writing, and was struck by sundry repetitions of my name. I secured the letter, which I carried off with me to peruse in a place of greater surety. I still preserve it carefully; it was dated from the first days of the Regency. Here are some extracts from it which do not flatter me. Madame must have been indeed stricken with a mania for correspondence before she came to write in French, which was not her habit, five or six pages to her son whom she saw every day:

"MY DEAR SON,—I have only one favour to ask you, in welcoming your Regency—that is, never to employ the infamous Abbé Dubois, who deserves to be hanged as high as Haman, without prejudice to his punishment below. This man, against whom I have a cause of complaint in the education he has given you, would sacrifice the State and you to his slightest interest. He does not know what virtue is, or at least he weighs it against current coin. I could wish you to have as little confidence in this Abbé as I have myself. I am astonished that you, who know him, should venture to rely on him; your greatest enemy would be preferable. But you are, indeed, one of your family; it is impossible to detach you from the people to whom you are accustomed. If lies could choke, he would be dead long ago. Do you remember that Madame de Haute-*fort* said of him: 'The first truth that issues from his lips I will

have enshrined, in the fashion of a relic.' In truth, lying is the art in which he excels; the list of his impostures would reach from Paris to Rome, where there are not enough indulgences to absolve him. I believe that the word *arch* applies to all his qualities. He is an arch-rogue, an arch-liar, an arch-hypocrite, an arch-libertine, and, in a word, an arch-scoundrel. . . ."

Having read and pondered over Madame's letter, I repaired to the Regent, who received me coldly, with an air of repression. I had put on so afflicted an expression that he asked me with his wonted kindness if I were ill.

"Yes, Monseigneur," I replied; "I am dying daily, for disgrace kills."

"You are jesting, Abbé, or you are out of your wits; go to one of your abbeys to recover from your fatigues, restore your health, and put on a little flesh."

"Monseigneur, once I have said adieu to you, I am dead and buried."

"Very well! What do you want, absolution or extreme unction?"

"Monseigneur, here you are all-powerful. Will you leave the man who has raised you without employment?"

"It is not the finest part of your life; but it is impossible for me to satisfy your ambition now."

"Remember, I beg of you, that if you do not set me to work, I cannot remain with you with honour."

"Do not stay then, my dear Abbé. What can I do for you? Does not all France know that you are a rogue? Do you not know it yourself?"

"True, Monseigneur; but do you not also know that all men are rogues; that there is only a question of degree?"

"What, rascal, would you forget that a prince is a man?"

"Never, Monseigneur; I do not include princes nor present company in generalities of this kind. But, amongst the rogues, you should choose those who have the sharpest wits, and I have pretensions to be of that class."

"I like to see that you do yourself justice."

"Do you prefer, Monseigneur, to have to do with those inflexible spirits, proud of their integrity, who are always putting dots on the *i*'s? It is people like me you need; they adapt themselves to your will."

"Liars, rogues, scoundrels,

'Au demeurant les meilleurs fils du monde.'"

"You will be fortunate to find anyone who is my equal in a negotiation. I tell you, Madame misunderstands your interests. . . ."

"Who has told you that Madame was troubling her head about you, Abbé?"

"No one has told me; but I tell you so, Monseigneur. This is not what you promised me before you were Regent; I have served you faithfully, and I deserve a different recompense."

Thereupon I made a feint of wiping my eyes, and left hurriedly, without answering the Prince's summons to me to return.

On the morrow, the first day of the year 1716, I went at an early hour to offer my compliments and good wishes to His Royal Highness, whom I found still in bed. Madame de Parabère, his new mistress, was at his bedside. I was withdrawing, thinking the Prince to be particularly engaged, when he cried to me to enter, and made me sit down opposite the Parabère, whom I recognised.

"Dubois," said he, "thank this fair lady, who has taken an interest in you, and asks me to give you your New Year's gift."

"Madame," I cried, "I trust to Monseigneur for the acquittal of my debt; I can wish you nothing better than the love of so great a Prince."

"Abbé," interrupted the Regent, "I have just been informed of the death of the Archbishop of Sens."

"You will make me an Archbishop?"

"Not yet; but you are Secretary of State in his stead."

"When one of your ministers dies, remember that I am Dubois, of the wood of which they are made."

"What a grotesque face you have, M. Dubois!" said Madame de Parabère, laughing, and examining me from head to foot.

"Have no fear, Madame," I retorted; "some day I shall cut a fine figure."

"Dubois," resumed the Duc d'Orléans, "do not again accuse Madame of opposing your advancement; she thinks more good of you than she says."

"How many others, Monseigneur, say more than they think!"

"To conclude, Abbé, a little rectitude, I beseech you."

I retired in much satisfaction, without being piqued at the peals of laughter which Madame de Parabère threw at me. I walked about all day in the gardens and galleries of the Palais-Royal, saying to everyone, with an effusion of joy :

"You see a new Councillor of State."

I met the Abbé Bignon, the most envious of the envious. He stared at me with all his haughtiness. I suspected the post of Councillor of State would have pleased him as much as myself; I stabbed his pride to the heart with these words :

"Do you know, Monsieur, what they have made of me?"

"I do not believe they can ever make any good of you," he retorted.

"Do not flatter me, M. l'Abbé, or I may lose countenance."

"Yes, the reproach is severe; but when one is not of a certain birth, one ought to have the courage to refuse eminent dignities of the first order in the State."

I turned my back on the unmannerly fellow, and have always regretted that I did not chastise his insolence. Godefroy, Advocate to the Council, congratulated me more politely :

"My dear Abbé," said he, "I think you would be hard pressed for an answer were one to ask you : *Quid est justitia?*"

"What is justice? It is, first of all, to make me Councillor of State. And, if you care to continue your questions, you will find I am not at the end of my Latin."

On the 2nd of January, the King, who had lived at Vincennes since the death of Louis XIV, came to Paris to inhabit the Tuileries. I presented myself to Madame, to make a parade of my office, and get a little enjoyment out of her discomfiture. I ran across her on the staircase on her way to pay her respects to the young King.

"Here is a bird of ill-omen," she said, stopping.

"Madame," I replied, "I came to thank you for the grace Monseigneur the Regent has just done me."

"Keep your thanks for others, Master Abbé; I do not even know what the grace is; and, if my opinion had been asked, you would have had to thank nobody."

"Madame, His Royal Highness has just appointed me Councillor of State."

"You, Councillor of State! A pretty Councillor of State! Is my son a raving lunatic? I salute you, Councillor of State."

She left me laughing in my sleeve at her anger and surprise.

Madame was a malicious German, who bit when she seemed to kiss. She had spent her whole life in hating folk, to pass the time. She saw no harm in a piece of treachery, where it was a question of vexing an enemy. She was actuated by a like motive when, a few days after the King's death, she paid a visit to Madame de Maintenon, in her retirement at the Convent of Saint-Cyr. The Maintenon shuddered when she saw her enter her chamber.

"Madame," she said, "what are you doing or seeking here?"

"I have come to mingle my tears with those of the person whom the King loved best."

"'Tis you, Madame, whom the King loved best, and not I, who never flattered him. Nothing, moreover, has been left undone to injure me with him; he has told me this himself; and truly, were I not a Christian woman, I should never forgive my enemies."

After this petty piece of vengeance she withdrew.

The first use I made of my credit was to urge the Regent to make the tax-collectors disgorge. My hatred of Bourvalais, the richest of these upstarts, was here in harmony with justice. Bourvalais had laid the foundation of his vast fortune under Pontchartrain. He was by origin a little vagabond, without father or mother, living by his vices; he became a lackey, then a clerk, then Secretary of the Council and Contrôller of Finance in Burgundy. Everything succeeded with him, as though it had been pre-ordained; his wealth accumulated so rapidly, that he soon had palaces, town and country houses, carriages and mistresses; nothing came amiss to him so long as he could make money. It was of him that the proverb of the treasures arose: "Little streams make great rivers." His millions did not redeem his ignoble hideousness, his low fashions of speaking and acting, and his lackey-like insolence. I had reasons for wishing him more harm than good.

One of my kinsmen, postmaster at Verdun, knowing me to be much advanced in honours, came to Paris in 1712 to propose a new scheme of taxation which I was to get accepted. My position did not permit me to sell his idea. I persuaded him to seek out Bourvalais, as if it had been at his own impulse, and acquaint him with his project. I reserved to myself a share

of the benefices. Bourvalais undertook to get the tax adopted by the Council, and gave a bill for twelve thousand livres in favour of my poor kinsman, as a payment for his advice. I only received two thousand livres out of this sum. He went to draw his money at the appointed time, but he discovered that the bill had been stolen from him. He made a claim, attested, but could get nothing; he was put to the door. In despair, and not daring to confess his misadventure to me, he addressed himself casually to an ex-officer, a sturdy knave, who undertook, on condition of going shares, to recover the whole sum.

In fact, having begged the unfortunate postmaster to await him in a place he designated, he effected an entry into the Hôtel de Bourvalais, and, pistol in hand, forced him to reimburse the lost bill. Bourvalais made no resistance, not even an objection, counted out the sum into the hands of the man with the pistol, and even escorted him politely to the foot of the stairs.

"Monsieur," said the rogue, "my accomplice awaits me at such and such a place; good-night."

Bourvalais, who saw himself in safety, replied with cries of "Stop thief!" The officer vanished, and could never be traced; but the miserly collector reflected on his counsel, and the postmaster, arrested, tried, and condemned on Bourvalais' accusation, came to a sad end. He is the only member of my family, up to the present, who has been hanged.

I had reprisals to make, therefore, against Bourvalais, who was so universally detested that at the performance of Lesage's *Turcaret*, the pit started shouting: "Name him!" At another time, when he was present in a box at that scathing satire on financiers, the actor who played the principal part paused to say aloud: "Gentlemen, there is a person present who could better fill my part." It was with a joy then, that Court and Town shared, that I succeeded in establishing a court of justice to try these blood-suckers of the people. Fourquieux, who was president, knew the art of tracking down the guilty; Bourvalais, however, defended himself with such vigour, that he was released from prison after a sentence of three years, and one of his mistresses, since become the Regent's, even reinstated him in a portion of his property. Many people shared the spoils; the Duchesse de Berri seized all the plate; the Duc de Guiches his carriages; I

contented myself with several fine estates in Brie. M. Fourquieux, in memory of the trial, kept the huge silver vases which Bourvalais used at table to cool his wines and liqueurs: hence his nickname of keeper of the seals (*sceaux*). Another tax-collector, son of a gentleman of Lyons, had a cellar full of Tokay wine, representing a value of a million; his treasury was inspected, found empty, and he was only granted till the evening to make good the deficiency of sixty thousand livres. He was condemned to death, but by the clemency of His Royal Highness, the sentence was commuted into one of perpetual imprisonment. His confiscated property passed into various hands. It is to him I owe my well-garnished cellar; the son-in-law of this collector was sufficiently a connoisseur of good fare to regret these exquisite wines, if not his father-in-law.

The war to the death waged against the tax-collectors was a prelude to the establishment of a general bank. Money was growing scarce in the King's coffers, when the appearance of Law caused it to rain millions for more than four years. Law is a man of genius in his fashion, and the harm he did was not altogether his fault. The Regent spent and ruined his credit by casting money broadside. It was Lord Stairs who established Law in France; they were both Scots, and it is said that the men of that nation are not averse to giving one another a helping hand. They were also acquainted with the gambling hells of London, where Law had won enormous sums. One day when I was talking to the latter of the philosopher's stone, he said with conviction that he had found it.

"You are jesting," we said.

"I can tell you my secret; to make gold out of paper."

"With paper? It is all very well to say so; when shall we see this masterpiece?"

"In about three or four years."

Law confided some idea of his system to the Earl of Stairs, who approved of it as an agreeable madness.

"Indeed," he said, "it might succeed with a nation of madmen, but in England, never."

"Very well, I will go to France."

Stairs, who, since the foundation of the Regency, was inseparable from the Regent, induced him to found a banking company and bring Law upon the scene.

Law was the son of a goldsmith or usurer of Edinburgh, who left him a fortune, for the goldsmiths of Great Britain generally lend money on pledges. This Law, who derived nothing from his birth and education but a prodigious science of calculation, modelled his conduct and expenses on the example of members of the great world; he won large sums of money and lost largely. He was more completely unfortunate in his love affairs; for, having become amorous of a coquette named Mrs Wilson, he was challenged to a duel by the husband, to whom he sought to prove by figures the numerous infidelities of his wife. Poor Wilson was killed, after the rule, which ever makes the husband succumb to the lover. Law fled to escape the consequences of the law. The widow followed him, to have some compensation for the husband of whom her lover had deprived her. Law was so much in her toils that he has not yet been able to get rid of her, and she has ever since passed as his wife. She was a little Englishwoman, lively, elegant, and determined; white-skinned and fair-haired, and, in spite of everything, faithful to her Scot. The Duc d'Orléans, who would have liked shares in her as well as in the bank, had his pains for nothing. She never spoke of her husband save with glowing admiration. Law, infatuated with this woman, and lying under the weight of a capital charge, in order to live, devised a financial system, which was a fine thing before it was ruined by extravagances. But for twenty years he offered it to all the sovereigns of Europe without meeting with anything but refusals and contempt. England, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy, treated him rather less well than a quack. The King of Sicily, a great mathematician, let him explain all the chances of the system, calculated, approved, verified, and, after a thousand eulogies, said to Law:

"Monsieur, if I was powerful enough to let myself be ruined, I should not hesitate a moment in giving you the preference."

During these always unsuccessful journeys, Law, to maintain his patience, was in the habit of playing with a good fortune which had little resemblance to chance. His industry was more remunerative than his hopes; finally, he arrived in France, in the latter days of Louis XIV. Desmerets, a minister in search of expedients and excessively short of money, received him with respect, and declared in favour of his system; but the aged King recoiled before an operation so vast and hazardous; he preferred

to keep his old debts rather than run the risk of increasing them. Law, however, convinced that France was more adapted than any other country to reap the fruits of his system, waited patiently for the King's death, to scatter his *golden dust* in men's eyes.

Law, when I saw him in 1715, was forty years old, or at least, had that appearance. I have no liking for those Scots faces, strongly characterised by tawny eyes and red hair. The Court ladies, doubtless for love of the bank and its banker, very nearly made red hair the fashion. Law was of middle height, well-set, gracious, and winning; he was noticeable for a peculiar gesture, that of a man counting out money. He spoke all languages, and especially French, with a disagreeable accent; polished in his manners, he preferred to smile instead of addressing a word, or replying to anyone. A strange alteration was effected in him by the influence of his fortune. So long as play was his only means of subsistence, he fought tooth and nail at a game of cards and was never wounded; once his bank established, he became an incredible coward.

"Because," said he, "I am like the goose with the golden eggs, which, once dead, would be worth no more than an ordinary bird."

Finally, great prosperity rendered him proud to insolence, and I reproached him with this one day:

"Law," said I, "I hope you will never become King of France; you would crush us all like ants."

Stairs was so intimately bound up with Law, that it was inevitable he should have a deadly quarrel with him when the latter had gained him more than three millions. He did his best to urge on the creation of a bank on the model of those of Holland and England. Law wished nothing better than to get his foot in the stirrup, and, indeed, his principles were so reasonable that I was the first to be seduced by them. Stairs, who was never out of the Palais-Royal, gradually worked upon the Regent's enthusiasm for the formation, with the State funds, of a bank, entrusted to Law in the capacity of director. The Duc d'Orléans, however, all on fire at first, cooled down considerably when it became a question of drawing up the edict; it was then that Law brought his cunning manœuvres into play, lavishing money and promises. They were too well aware of my credit with the Prince, not to employ it at any cost. Stairs sent

for me privately, and Law, whom he presented to me as a genius, beat me on his own ground, proving to me the advantages of the bank, advantages clear enough to me, since, in addition to a sum payable after the inauguration of the system, they gave me the first thirty out of the twelve thousand shares to be issued. I entered warmly into these magnificent plans, and gave the Regent no peace until he had agreed to everything.

"The Devil!" he said to me, "you make a warm partisan, and I will postpone utilising your talents."

"Command, Monseigneur, there may be bad advocates, but there are no bad causes."

I came out with honour, and even persuaded the Regent not to risk the public finances, as Law offered to furnish the funds from his company. The edict was published in the month of May. Promises, as we know, cost no more than the making; Law was lavish of them; his aim, according to the edict, was to increase the circulation of money, to put an end to usury, to provide for vehicles between Paris and the provinces, to give foreigners a means of safe investment within the kingdom, and finally to give the people facilities for the sale of supplies and the payment of taxes. A concession of twenty years was granted him. This period of twenty years was reduced to four. The bank, at its origin, did not seem likely to swallow up everyone's fortune, as was the case with the Mississippi Company, founded subsequently. Law, in one word, was an admirable financier; but the young King, having heard it stated that Law was a Protestant, informed the Regent of his fears in these words:

"He is not a Catholic, Monsieur; beware of trusting him."

Law locked up his projects for the future in his own breast, and his cunning resembled good faith; but I fathomed him when, on bringing me the sum of which I have spoken, he said in my ear:

"M. l'Abbé, become my partner, and in three years you will be able to buy the city of Paris."

"No," I replied; "I have too much to lose."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES — HIS MISFORTUNES — HIS PORTRAIT—NEGOTIATIONS WITH ENGLAND—LETTERS FROM DUBOIS TO LORD STANHOPE—DUBOIS' MISSION TO THE HAGUE —THE BOOKS AND PICTURES—CONFERENCES—THE SECOND JOURNEY—DUBOIS IN HANOVER—GEORGE I—THE KING'S DINNER—ROBERT WALPOLE—DUBOIS AT THE HAGUE

THE Chevalier de Saint-Georges was still at Avignon, where he intended to remain, so he said, until he was driven out. The destiny of this Prince was the result of the last homily of his father, James II, who thought far less of his lost kingdom than of his devotions, and who had nothing better to give his son on his death-bed than these Jesuitical counsels:

"However fine a crown may be, there comes a time when it is quite indifferent; respect your mother, love the King of France as your benefactor, and put your religion before all human grandeur."

The King of France, his benefactor, signed the Treaty of Utrecht, which annulled all the rights of James III, the title under which he had been recognised by Louis XIV, in answer to the tearful prayers of his mother. On the death of his sister, Queen Anne, his partisans urged him to turn, or to declare himself Protestant, in order to regain his throne. The recollection of his father's last words operated on that timorous soul; like poor James II, the son lost three kingdoms for a mass. He first retired to Bar, to the Duke of Lorraine, who ceaselessly encouraged his fruitless perseverance, but had nothing but advice to give him. At last the Prince of Wales, or King James III, obtained some secret assistance from Louis XIV, and landed in Scotland with slender resources but large stores of hope. He arrived just in time to complete the ruin of his cause, and after sundry successes made a retreat which resembled a flight: it was at the moment of the death of Louis XIV. The ambassador of England, the Earl of Stairs,

had a mission from his Government to hinder the Pretender's return to France. Stairs reproached the Regent, therefore, with having favoured the Scottish expedition in despite of all the treaties of the late King. This gave him an opportunity to demand that Stuart should be handed over to the English Parliament, which had tried him in his absence and condemned him to death for the crime of high treason. The Regent refused to commit this treachery; the refusal was expected. He was then asked not to afford a shelter to the fugitive Prince in France; he consented for the sake of peace, but secretly warned the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, who regained our territory, returned to Paris, reappeared at Saint-Germain, and narrowly missed assassination at the hands of agents of the Court of London. The Regent was indignant at this violation of rights of nations; but to appease him I saturated him with political *whys* and *wherefores*. The Chevalier de Saint-Georges made no great stir at Avignon, where he waited for better days. The English cabinet persisted in demanding his extradition or exile. I think that Louis XIV being dead, and his promises likewise, it would have been well to hand over the Pretender to George I, who would have been content to keep him in some safe seclusion. This would have assured the tranquillity of England; and the interest of France spoke more loudly than all the prejudices of hospitality. Now that the Chevalier de Saint-Georges has a son, we see the war of succession perpetuated; but since Alberoni failed in this enterprise, I doubt if anyone else will succeed.

I confess I set small stock upon ministers who lose their places, or kings who lose their crowns; they are ordinarily but sorry sirs, for genius always picks itself up however low it may have fallen. The Chevalier de Saint-Georges is the living proof of this unhappy lack of capacity; he has all the qualities of a gallant fit to shine with women, that is all; he will play his part well in church, in the bed-chamber; but he would be supremely out of place on a throne. His face is regular and handsome, but always absent or melancholy; his manners are noble; his speech is unaccompanied by wit, and harps incessantly on his pretensions to royalty. I have never liked him, and do not think he repays me with ingratitude. I happened to say, after seeing him fawning on this one and on that, that he had the air of asking

alms; this *mot* was repeated to him, and he manifested his gratitude less sillily than was his wont.

"M. l'Abbé," he said to me mildly, "are you jealous of me, and do you take my crown of England for a benefice, that I withhold from you?"

Assuredly I have not served him as I might have done in my negotiations; nevertheless, I have refused large sums of money rather than deliver him to his enemies. Later, I made use of him for my projects, and I owe him at least the half of my red hat.

England, through her ambassador, obstinately continued her attacks upon the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. A canal which had been commenced at Mardick, near Dunkirk, served as a pretext for a rupture with France; the Regent was desirous of peace, in order to repair the disasters which had attended the latter end of the reign of Louis XIV. In spite of the chiefs of the Council, who were unwilling to appear to attach too much value to the British alliance, the Regent fawned upon the Earl of Stairs, and, through him, the English ministers.

The latter had but one reply to all these advances:

"Let the Chevalier de Saint-Georges leave France, and the Mardick Canal be abandoned."

The overtures for peace seemed likely to finish in a universal war; Holland and the Emperor were endeavouring to goad England against France. It was in this dilemma that the Regent had recourse to what small influence I possessed. In order that my negotiations might not seem inspired by him, I adopted a diplomatic tone in my correspondence with my friend Stanhope, and pretended to be anxious for a good understanding between our two masters, "to the end that he might drink only of the finest wines of France, and I of the cider of Goldpepin, instead of our rough Norman cider." But Lord Stanhope, who undertook this important business, was not disposed to carry it to a successful issue; I even fear that he employed his credit with George I to defeat it.

About this time, the House of Austria proposed an offensive and defensive alliance to Holland and England. To gain time, the Regent wrote to M. de Châteauneuf, our ambassador at the Hague, bidding him declare his projects of alliance with England and the Republic to the States-General. Stanhope gave me notice that he was about to accompany King George to Hanover;

this was an invitation to me to join him. The Regent had long destined me for this extraordinary and secret mission. The Maréchal d'Huxelles, who watched with envy my growing power in the Regency, did all he could to prevent my journey to the Hague. He almost convinced the Prince that in a private conversation it would be difficult to surmount the prejudices of Lord Stanhope, whose views were diametrically opposite to those of His Royal Highness. "Moreover," said he, "it is impossible to keep the Abbé Dubois' journey secret; it will be in vain for him to allege private or frivolous motives; who will believe that a Councillor of State, honoured with the confidence of His Royal Highness, has taken such a step uselessly and without aim? There is no doubt, then, that this negotiation would have to be abandoned, although M. de Châteauneuf might carry it through in Holland." My eloquence, however, won the day over the jealousy of the Marquis d'Huxelles.

Before my departure, I offered a specimen of my tact to the Regent, who knew how much freedom I put into my correspondence. Indeed, in the gravest matters I employ the most comical expressions, provided they exactly portray my idea. I have a horror of law-court harangues; to speak naturally, vivaciously, and right to the point—that is my method. His Royal Highness would fain have persuaded me that I did not possess the befitting dignity to treat as a plenipotentiary with ministers, the Grand-Pensioner, and, perhaps, with the King himself.

"I take up your challenge, Monseigneur," said I; "I suppose Fontenelle seems to you, as he does to me, the most skilled in point of style? Another, if you prefer. Well! set a subject for a political letter, which we will both of us treat separately. I will wager that mine will be the letter of a diplomatist, his of an academician."

It was arranged we should write to M. de Châteauneuf; Fontenelle and I took up our pens, and I carried our two letters to the Regent, begging him to choose the one which suited him best; the first he read made him laugh with pity:

"Is it you who make points and phrases so nicely adjusted, Dubois?" he asked.

"Decide, Monseigneur, which of the two letters pleases you most."

"As if I could hesitate. One is as elegant, adroit, and well put as the other is ridiculous, foolish, and painfully elaborated."

"Thanks for your praise, Monseigneur; do not tell Fontenelle, I beg you; I should blush to be thought cleverer than the cleverest of the academicians."

It has been alleged that I took advantage of the letter of Fontenelle, upon whom I laid the blame of the stupidities of my own. To believe people of good faith who attack me with libels, satires, and caricatures, I am a prize fool. I should like to see the wittiest of them all keep the place I hold, only for a week.

I set off on the 4th of July, making no great stir, and as though I were going to Holland to buy books and pictures. I was accompanied by Manet only. I arrived at the Hague shortly before Stanhope, and deployed all my little ruses, hiding my title of ambassador extraordinary. I went, under the pretext of seeing some horses that M. de Châteauneuf had to sell, to have an interview with him in his stables, and inform him of my mission. We settled what course to take, without my being taken for aught else than an amateur of horses. I was patiently waiting for my friend Stanhope, whilst I surrounded myself with a pile of books, which gave me more the appearance of a scholar than a diplomatist. Stanhope found me in the midst of my tomes and ancient canvases; we embraced like old friends, and I spoke to him at first of everything except the projected alliance.

"My dear man," he said, "are you going to set up as a bookseller and picture-dealer . . .?"

"Do not laugh," I replied; "I have been acquiring objects of value, a part of which I shall sell in France."

"I knew you when you had more frivolous tastes."

"When I was younger, 'tis true; but will you take a glance at this catalogue of books to be sold at Leyden; the librarian of King William spent his life in collecting them."

"Pray whence came this passion for pictures?"

"From the vast size of my fortune, which is difficult to administer. You find me ravished at my latest acquisition; the picture of the 'Seven Sacraments,' by Poussin, was brought away from France by Dutch merchants; I am proud of having bought it back."

"No doubt His Royal Highness will give you double its price. . . ."

"You remind me of a letter which concerns you. 'I have learned,' says the Prince, 'that there are movements at the

Court of London against the Duke of Argyll, favourite of the heir-presumptive. As I know Lord Stanhope is a friend of that nobleman, and very well looked on by the Prince of Wales himself, I am afraid of his being implicated in this storm. If you should happen to see him when he passes the Hague, I authorise you, my dear Abbé, to offer him from me good offices, friends, money—in a word, all that depends upon me.”

“Will you inform His Royal Highness of my sincere gratitude. I am in no way compromised in the affair of the Duke of Argyll; but I thank from the bottom of my heart those who deign to be interested in my good or evil fortune.”

I had brought Stanhope to the point of conferring with me as to the alliance to be treated of between England and France; he bristled with difficulties which I had to refute one after the other. He insisted that there should be no mention made of the Treaty of Utrecht, which was offensive to the House of Austria. I agreed to the following conditions, beyond which I was forbidden to pass:—

(1.) The guarantee of the English Succession in the Protestant line, at the same time as the guarantee of the Treaties of Utrecht in their entirety should be agreed to.

(2.) To compel the Chevalier de Saint-Georges to leave Avignon, and to fulfil this article between the signing of the alliance and the exchange of ratifications.

(3.) To refuse asylum to rebels against Great Britain.

(4.) To make the opening of the Mardick Canal of such a kind that ships of war could not enter it.

(5.) To treat conjointly and on the same footing with the States-General of Holland.

It was not without exertion that, after these conferences, which lasted far into the night, I brought round Lord Stanhope to my opinions; he promised every success to my negotiation provided that I obtained from the Regent a loyal explanation of the past, positive assurances for the future, and, above all, a formal renunciation of the Pretender's cause. I resolved to return to Paris rather than confide my secrets to others. On the eve of my departure I invited Stanhope to supper, and we sealed our old friendship with reciprocal confidences. Only, as I laid down the law very despotically, blaming kings and ministers, he asked me if I had studied public rights in Turkey. Indeed,

my merit lay in address, or intrigue, if you like, and I had not learned diplomacy by rule.

I was back in Paris towards the last days of July. I repaired secretly to the Regent, who embraced me with joy, for I had written him the details of my interviews with Stanhope, and he could see how much ground I had gained in a few hours.* The Maréchal d'Huxelles, who dreaded the success of my negotiations, was of opinion that the Regent should send by courier a memorandum of his offers to the King of England; but I had no trouble in persuading him that my presence was indispensable. Madame, to whom His Royal Highness spoke of it, said that if ruses, thieving, or deceit were required, I was an incomparable man. My departure was settled then; but this time I had to conceal the ambassador under the title of the Chevalier de Saint-Albin. I thus baptised myself, to vex the Abbé de Saint-Albin, who was mighty proud of being a bastard of the Duc d'Orléans.

I set off in a post-chaise which I bought from M. Crozat. Of my servants I took only Manet, whose wages were doubled that he might serve me as interpreter; Forceville, my *valet-de-chambre*; Sourdeval, my secretary, and Chef, my cook, the indispensable adjunct of an ambassador.

I had a large sum on me in bills of exchange upon a Brussels banker. On the road, I thought of procuring a confidential courier; I regretted already that I had not chosen one myself at Paris. Manet, to whom I said a few words on the subject, said:

“Monsieur, if you will permit me, I have the man you need.”

“How did you know him?”

“I do not know him.”

“Where is he?”

“In the hostelry where I have been taking refreshment; he drank so heartily that he must be a good fellow.”

I caused the carriage to halt until Manet had brought me his *protégé*. He was no youth, but a lusty fellow of forty, robust, thick-set, and of a joyous countenance. It seemed to me I had

* The dispatches having relation to this important mission are to be found in the “Correspondence of Cardinal Dubois,” published by M. de Sevelinges. This work, much esteemed by diplomatists, contains proofs of the authenticity of these memoirs. [*Editor's Note.*]

seen him somewhere before; he had the same idea, for he gazed at me fixedly.

"What is your name?" said I.

"Maroy, Monsieur."

"Maroy! That is a name which sounds familiar to me."

"It is possible; I have been courier to the Duc de Lorraine. . . ."

"But really, it is you then, little rascal . . . !"

"And you, Monsieur de Saint-Albin, are you not the Abbé Dubois?"

"Silence, Maroy! you are still under my ferule! I am pleased to see you, bad lot that you are; but what have you done with the education I gave you?"

"It is like myself, it has played the truant."

"Do you consent to enter my service?"

"Just as you were in that of my father and myself!"

I merely laughed at Maroy's insolence, and gave Manet the task of indoctrinating him. This Maroy, who left me when I became cardinal, had done honour to his master; he had run away from the paternal roof, but, unlike the Prodigal Son, had never returned; he had plied all the trades that an honest man may; he had lost all that could be lost in bad company; he had served the Duc de Lorraine and the Chevalier de Saint-Georges as courier, and when he had grown used to my somewhat brutal manners, I grew used to his own, which were no more gentle. Thus one of us was always in a temper; otherwise, we understood each other well. The impertinent knave was so set upon imitating me that he often passed as myself with my mistresses: *Inde irae*.

I reached Brussels about five o'clock in the evening, and to my great disappointment discovered I had lost my purse. I needed money to lodge and feed all my people. I repaired then with Sourdeval and Maroy to the banker who was to pay my bills of exchange. The banker had gone to a merry-making and would not return till very late, I was told by a valet who was in charge of the house. I swore, to appease my anger a little; the cashier arrived, but without money, and promised it me for the following morning at ten o'clock. I could do no more; I obtained credit until then, owing to my favourable appearance. At ten o'clock I was at the banker's door with my two body-guards, Sourdeval,

the gentlest of men, and Maroy, the most passionate after myself.

"Heavens, Monsieur," said the cashier, "my master is still asleep after the fatigues of last night. It would be cruel to awake him; come back some other time."

"What a misfortune to be at the mercy of lackeys!" I cried; "this rogue here wastes my time and makes me miss business of the utmost importance."

"Sdeath," added Maroy, who was already endeavouring to copy me, "if the rascal had his deserts I should cut off his two ears and nail them up like a sign before his door."

"Gentlemen," replied the poor cashier, gripping the keys of his coffers, "insults as much as you wish, but spare me blows."

"I have an itch to cut something away from you," continued Maroy. "Choose; your ears or your nose?"

"Thieves! Murder!" bellowed the cashier.

The banker thought someone had designs on his coffers; he sprang out of bed and rushed down in his shirt, pistols in hand. This sight brought a calm, and I imposed silence on Maroy.

"What is all this?" asked the banker.

"I want money," I replied; "I have been here twice with my bills of exchange, and this cursed lackey refuses to pay them."

"Messieurs les Français," said the banker, "I ought first of all to pay you for all this noise by beating you for interest of the money, and by summoning the Imperial Guard, which would make you lower your voice."

"Monsieur," I interrupted, alarmed at the consequences of my violence, "let us say no more about it, but pay us."

"M. le Marquis de Saint-Prié, Governor of the Low Countries, would be glad to know what this very urgent business is."

"Monsieur, excuse my servant; he defends my interests more keenly than I do myself."

"See that these brawlers are paid—all in silver and copper, if possible."

With these terrible words the banker gave us a look of immense dignity and majestically withdrew. The Imperial Guard with which he had threatened me, seemed to me at my back, and I fled fearfully at the prospect of seeing an ambassador of His Most Christian Majesty in prison. Maroy, who was only strong when he had my support, followed or even preceded me like a

faithful courier. Sourdeval was not so much moved; he sat down familiarly by the side of the cashier, who was beginning to count out the sum in small coins; we should have wanted two horses to carry it. Sourdeval flattered the cashier so diplomatically, that by three o'clock he had received the whole sum in gold. 'Tis true I paid the price of this concession. I had not thought it prudent to await him in Brussels, and he only rejoined me at Louvain, where I lay, my mind still haunted by the Imperial troops. I recalled the banker's threats when my negotiation was finished, and had I made a complaint to the Marquis de Saint-Prié, he would not have shrunk from imprisonment as a punishment for the insolence that was shown me; but I was already accustomed to pardon injuries; that, too, is a form of vengeance. I contented myself with counselling the banker to be less brutal in future.

Whilst traversing the Austrian Low Countries, I found myself more than once embarrassed in other ways; I understood less German than my horses, and had no other interpreter than Manet, who believed he spoke that language, or at least had made me believe it. The devil took us to Louvain, to a German inn, where we talked a mighty lot without making ourselves understood.

"Order some new-laid eggs," said I to Manet.

He jabbered a few words, and the hostess brought me a flagon of Rhine wine.

"Manet," I cried angrily, "is she making a jest of me? You had best to chuck her in the Mardick Canal!"

It was an expression I had adopted since my embassy. Manet spoke again to the host, who appeared to understand him, and then put a pitcher of beer in front of me. I could no longer restrain myself, and I flung myself upon Manet, crying:

"Are we in the tower of Babel, pray? I must spit the cursed knave!"

Mine host, Sourdeval, and Chef fled away; only Manet did not budge. I drew my sword with such vigour that the hilt was left in my hand, but not the blade. The rascal Manet, who feared lest some day he might not get off without two or three slashes in the belly, had taken precautions against accidents. The sight of my inoffensive weapon calmed my rage, and I burst into a peal of hearty laughter. Sourdeval returned, and was a mighty adroit substitute for the incompetent Manet; he took a pencil and drew a hen and eggs. I was served as I desired.

I arrived at Hanover, greatly inconvenienced by a retention of urine, which I did not mean to flaunt through the streets after the manner of Maroy. In spite of my prohibiting the persons of my suite from leaving the inn, where I had descended with much mystery, he teased the women and girls, proclaiming aloud his quality of courier to an ambassador. I was informed of it in sufficient time to bid him hold his tongue. Stanhope, informed of my arrival, came to see me secretly, until such time when I should be in a condition to present myself before His Britannic Majesty. M. d'Yberville had seconded me so warmly in London, that we were almost agreed with England. At this point, as I learned that the Marquis de Louville, ex-commander of the Royal Guard of the Musketeers of Philip V, had not been received by that Prince, to whom his duty was to excuse the alliance of France with England. My zeal was redoubled. I flattered myself I should reap considerable honour from my negotiation, which was regarded by most as infeasible. 'Tis true that difficulties multiplied on every side. However, I do not think that, as Madame has often said, my Lord Stairs aimed at embroiling the Regent with England, by representing him as the secret ally of the Pretender. His Royal Highness never furnished money or arms to the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, and his only mistake was in not interfering with him whilst he loitered in France. On the other hand, Stairs could not have kept his mask so long; he shared our pleasures, our *fêtes*, and nothing transpired on his part. In short, what will not calumny invent? People have gone so far as to pretend that Stairs had had interviews with M. Benderitter, the Emperor's envoy, with the intent to form a league to dethrone the King of Spain, and replace him by the King of Sicily. Stairs can be neither a spy nor a traitor; he owes almost his whole fortune to the Regent.

Stanhope spoke so favourably of me to George I, that he expressed a wish to see me. I was presented to him by my friend, and the welcome given me would have quite won me over to England, if I had not been already convinced by a thousand reasons. George I, who was only fifty-six years of age, had an expression of German frankness which he did not belie; he was not fettered by his royal dignity, and did not allow others to feel embarrassed by it. His smile suggested a cordiality the most opposed to the etiquette of courts. He spoke with an affable

air, preferring to employ French, and his kindness was apparent in all he said. His daughter, the Queen of Prussia, who was on her way through Hanover at that time, displayed equal benevolence to me.

"M. de Saint-Albin," said the Queen, "you would have done well to bring us the French fashions."

"Madame," I replied, "I had not the honour of being your plenipotentiary."

Five days later, Maroy had given such proof of his diligence, that he returned with the newest Paris toilettes. The Queen thanked me, and paid me ten times their value.

I was admitted at dinner to their Majesties' private concert, with Stanhope and Robert Walpole, the King's favourite minister. He is an able man, although nowadays they call him the *Father of Corruption*, and I think with him that there is a tariff for every conscience. For the rest, it is amazing to hear him talk of money; he draws up the most admirable financial projects, and I have no doubt he will surpass Law should the fancy take him. The dinner was spent in discussion of the alliance and all points were practically settled; so that at dessert nothing remained but to obtain the consent of Holland to the same conditions. There were frequent allusions to the Pretender, and the King expressed himself on this subject without animosity; he even pitied him in terms worthy of both alike.

"In your place, Sire," said Walpole, carelessly, "I would offer him two or three millions to renounce his pretensions."

"The two or three millions," retorted Stanhope, "would be exchanged for powder and arms. This time the whole of Scotland would adopt the Stuart cause."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "the Chevalier de Saint-Georges will have no lack of arms and money in France to form expeditions."

"Sire," I cried, with a grieved air, "be generous, and do not force me to defend the honour of the King of France to you."

"The King of France is not touched by the reproach I make; but his Roman Catholic clergy, who look upon us as heretics."

"You repay them in kind, Sire, and praise God religious warfare is confined to the bull *Unigenitus*."

"I have in my hands," said the King, "proofs of the understanding which exists between the Chevalier de Saint-Georges

and your bishops. That of Bayeux, for instance, M. de Nesmont, allowed King James II a pension of thirty thousand livres, half of which the son still draws. . . ."

"That is a point to elucidate," said Stanhope.

"Sire," I said, with a laugh, to turn the conversation, "you do not know that dear M. de Nesmont?"

"Do you take me for the Pretender, M. de Saint-Albin?" cried King George, filling his glass.

"Heaven forbid, Sire! but to return to the Bishop of Bayeux, I will only quote one trait which will enable you better to appreciate what man he is. M. de Nesmont is of a virgin innocence; but you must not judge his conduct by his utterances, which are bold to the verge of rashness. A woman dare not confess to him for fear of the grotesque questions he puts to his penitents. He is mighty fond of preaching, and his sermons have quite another eloquence than that of the pulpit. He had assisted at a very brilliant wedding; the day after in his sermon he began to thunder against weddings in terms so diverting that his audience laughed in his face. A good curate, who had listened gravely to this quaint outburst, lifted up his voice and said: 'Monseigneur, nevertheless, our Lord Himself went to the wedding at Cana in Galilee.' 'You are right,' he answered, after a moment's reflection, 'He went; but He had much better not have gone.'"

"There is a Papist who is half mad," said Stanhope, with a burst of laughter.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit!" I added.

"Gentlemen," interposed the King, "I propose a toast to the Pretender."

"You, Sire!" I cried.

"It is not the first time, M. de Saint-Albin. At the last carnival, a lovely woman, attached to the Stuarts, recognised me through my disguise; this was how I behaved towards her. She feigned not to know with whom she had to do, and spoke to me of the Chevalier de Saint-Georges with passionate devotion. I made a semblance of sharing her opinions, and she doubtless suspected I was concealing my real mind from her. She led me to a buffet, and, filling two glasses, 'To the Pretender's health!' she said. 'With all my heart,' I replied; 'I drink with a good will to the health of those who are unfortunate.' These very natural words won over this lady to my cause."

"Ah, Sire!" cried I, "if the Chevalier de Saint-Georges were to hear you, he would ask for your friendship."

"I should grant it him," answered the King, nobly.

I took leave of His Majesty and of Stanhope, and, all the conditions of the treaty being settled, I left Hanover for The Hague, where I was to find Lord Cadogan and Horace Walpole, brother of the minister, who had full powers for the signature of the alliance. This was again delayed. My desire to eclipse the ordinary ambassador of France induced me to give the preference to his hotel, in which to establish myself with a great train of people under my true name of Dubois. The Marquis de Châteauneuf witnessed my arrival with as little satisfaction as had been displayed of old by the Maréchal de Tallard in London.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MARQUIS DE CHÂTEAUNEUF; HIS FOOLISH TRAITS—THE DIAMOND BELT—THE SNUFF-BOXES—MADAME DE CHÂTEAUNEUF—DUBOIS CHANGES HIS SECRETARY—LETTER TO THE MARQUIS DE NOCÉ—HEINSIUS—LOUVOIS' INSOLENT—LORD CADOGAN—ROBERT WALPOLE—THE CONVENTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND—SIGNING OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE—LETTER FROM THE KING OF ENGLAND—DEPARTURE FROM THE HAGUE—THE MYSTERIOUS WARNING—RETURN TO THE PALAIS-ROYAL

THE Marquis de Châteauneuf is a goose all over; I know no man more infatuated with his ancestors; he is happy whenever he has an opportunity of speaking of that most high and puissant Seigneur, Charles de l'Aubespine, Marquis de Châteauneuf, rival of the Cardinal de Richelieu with the lovely Duchesse de Chevreuse, and prisoner at the Bastille. Then his pale face glows, and he laughs to himself. He bristles all over with little ruses, which are only ridiculous or useless. I should seem to be judging him unjustly were I to be silent upon two important facts which he relates to all comers, whenever his wife says to him, after the pattern of the sister in the *Thousand and One Nights*: "M. le Marquis, tell us what happened to you when you were ambassador at Constantinople; or the story of the dinner of snuff-boxes." And M. le Marquis begins, in his nasal tones, with his wonted formula of the Châteauneuf who was a rival of Richelieu. Here are the two stories in their entirety.

At the period when M. le Marquis was ambassador at the Porte, he was magnificently doing the honours of the heritage of the Châteauneuf who was Richelieu's rival. But his disinterestedness excited the admiration of the Believers. The Christians of the Holy Land, who, as we know, are all ragged millionaires, obtained the most stupendous services from the French Ambassador. Now the Christians, who are extremely grateful, deliberated as to some means of proving their gratitude. They sent to the Marquis deputies of good family, to offer him a belt

of diamonds. The one belonging to the Regent was not to be compared with it. But M. le Marquis refused the present with a grandeur of soul quite unparalleled.

"Gentlemen," he said to these poor Christians, "you owe me nothing for having done my duty."

"Monseigneur," replied the worthy men, "how can we testify to our gratitude?"

"Very well! Since you insist," he said, "give my secretary, Briancourt . . ."

"Your Excellency's bounty to me is extreme!" cried the secretary, thinking the diamonds already his.

"What may we give him?" asked the deputation.

"The title of Chevalier of the Holy Sepulchre," answered the ambassador, without the slightest intention of poking fun at his faithful retainer.

Now for the dinner of the snuff-boxes. When the Marquis was ambassador at The Hague, a few years before my visit, his inventiveness outvied that of the wily Ulysses. He invited all the wives and daughters of the Dutch ministers to a dinner, where no men were present except himself and his nephew, the Jesuit. The dinner was as gay as might be expected with such a company. The ladies took advantage of their husbands' absence to put themselves quite at their ease. Their heads became so exalted, that at dessert they were talking without heeding one another, and M. le Marquis was listening without speaking. Instead of a centre-piece, a dish of golden snuff-boxes, all of the same weight and workmanship, in number equal to that of the Dutch ladies, was brought up. It was a delicious treat for them. M. de Châteauneuf, rival of Richelieu, had never imagined anything so gallant. The snuff-boxes were compared, exchanged, and the ambassador, taking advantage of the ladies' good humour to make them chatter, plumed himself on having learned all the secrets of State. One of them said to him: "Monseigneur, you are a worthy gentleman"; another naturalised him by dubbing him Van Châteauneuf; this one talked to him of her children; another of her liquor business. In short, the wine went to everyone's head, and M. le Marquis can never remember what follies he said and did. History does not tell how the Jesuit became possessor of a snuff-box which nobody claimed.

To have done with this burlesque family, I will say one word

of the ambassadress, otherwise, Madame la Marquise, a female skeleton, the deplorable wreck of thirty amours, compelled, much against her will, to live on their memory. I began by obtaining her friendship by means of flattery, the consequences of which I happily escaped; but I obtained what I wished—namely, communication of the papers of the Embassy. They do me cruel injustice by attributing to me any other relations with this living skeleton, whom Sourdeval dubbed "the Beast of the Apocalypse." However, it was not a bad female; it took a thousand cares of me from attic to cellar; and has since politely undertaken charge of my purchase of linen and Holland sheets. The daughter of Madame la Marquise has followed, follows, and will follow, her mother's example. Her husband, the Comte de Morangis, allows her two lovers a month, no more. The nephew, Père de Castagnère, a Jesuit, had complete command over the minds both of uncle and aunt. I know few men for whom I have as great detestation; I am certain, however, of judging him without prejudice, when I say that I know no one more Jesuitically a Jesuit, the inward man as hideous as the outward, an insolent lackey, a liar, shameless, and a thief; the rest anon. He played the spy on me so well during my sojourn at The Hague, that I have little doubt he was working on his own account. I do not regret having done him all the harm I could. I should have liked to have sent him to Mississippi on a missionary ship.

Soon afterwards I changed my secretary. Sourdeval was growing deaf, to comply with the conditions of his name; he had in Normandy a wife, and children, whose number increased owing to his absence; his two thousand livres was none too much to feed and clothe the whole family; however, he fed, he clothed them, probably at my expense. Besides that, his laziness irritated me as much as his gentleness. I asked him whether he knew no one in Paris who would be capable of helping him until my embassy was at an end; he replied that one of his friends, Lavergne, who had been in the employment of a banker, would exactly suit me, and offered to write to him. The Abbé de Targny, assistant librarian to the King, had often recommended to me this Lavergne, who had ingratiated himself with the household of the Cardinal de Noailles. I wrote to the Abbé de Targny, to send me the rascal, and by chance kept back the letter which Sourdeval had written to his friend. It was to dissuade him

from entering my service, and that, in terms which decided me to show Master Sourdeval the door. I mind me of the portrait he drew of my person, like enough, though hardly flattering.

"Imagine this sprig of the Church," he said, "his black cloth, and the sword at his side; you will see a devil-may-care face, set in a huge perruque, a wrinkled forehead, a squat nose, curved and threatening eyebrows, beneath which gleam the eyes of a wild boar, a lean countenance all over pimples, a sour and peevish air, and the rest of the man even more displeasing."

Meanwhile, my treaty of alliance was not progressing; the English ministers left me alone; the States-General remained in a state of inaction; the Grand Pensioner, Heinsius, and the Marquis de Rié frustrated all my plans; my enemies in Paris breathed fire and flame against me. I was assailed with discouragement, and nearly on the point of returning to France. I decided to write to Nocé, Master of the Wardrobe to the Regent, in order that my complaints might be brought indirectly to His Royal Highness. I had not then unmasked that double traitor, who was surreptitiously undermining my credit.

"Monsieur,—At a time when all that one can desire is more nearly within my hands than I could ever have hoped, I am receiving most annoying letters in which I am reproached without rhyme or reason, for a fluctuating policy; and persons without knowledge of the present state of things, relying upon former ideas and old commonplaces, send me orders which derange my whole system; this makes me furious. And his Royal Highness is weak enough to subscribe to all this! This compels me to write to beg him either to revoke his orders or to recall me; indeed, I find it difficult to console myself at being so long absent from you. One ought not to try and argue at such long range, and I assure you they have no notion of what this country is. *Mitte sapientem et nihil dicas.* It takes more trouble to destroy their errors than to commit them to the principal affair, and one has to employ in fruitless dissertations time which might be serviceable. Henceforward, when a foreign mission is successful, I shall look upon it as a miracle surpassing those of St Antony of Padua. There are things of the utmost importance which I dare not write for fear lest they fall into the hands of persons who cannot endure those who are personally attached to the Prince, and who walk straight. This is distressing to

me, for there are means of making him the greatest personage of the day. Help me to combat those envious persons who mislead him, and my gratitude will know no bounds. The women of this country are, like myself, at His Highness's disposal; comely, for the most part, but cold and insipid."

I set down this letter, disfigured though it is by my *ninny* of a secretary; it proves that at this epoch when Nocé was so charitably working against me, I treated him more than ever as a frank and loyal friend.

Heinsius, who had been Grand-Pensioner of Holland for thirty-six years, had given proofs from time immemorial of his aversion for France. He was an upright minister, yet one who preferred the interests of his own hatred to those of his country. I confess that had I been in his place I should have shown no less resentment at an insult done him by Louvois; I have heard him relate it himself,—with an indignation which forty years had not cooled. Heinsius had been sent to France as an ambassador, to assert the rights of King William to the Principality of Orange. Heinsius threw himself upon the rock of Louvois pride; he used to receive foreign ministers like some college rector. A lively altercation ensued between them relative to the town of Orange, which each wished to retain within his frontiers.

"Monsieur," said Heinsius, "by what right do you talk to me with this air of authority? I am the envoy of a free people, which recognises no master."

"Very well!" replied Louvois in a fury; "take yourself off, and buzz no more at me."

"I shall go and tell my fellow-citizens of the reception I have met with from a minister of the King of France."

"Be careful, Monsieur, that I do not shut you up in the Bastille."

Heinsius left the room without replying, and Louvois, in a better frame of mind, restrained his departure by excuses which did not redeem his imprudent speech. Heinsius resembled the peasant of the Danube, as La Fontaine has painted him; to begin with, he had a wolfish look, and seemed always in a bad humour. His gross exterior did not dissuade him from gallantry, which he practised in his manner, and watch in hand, as my courier Maroy said.

Lord Cadogan and Horace Walpole, agents of England, displayed more esteem for me than I deserved. The first talked little, fatigued himself with reverences, ate and drank largely; he even composed a treatise upon French and English cookery. Marlborough, whose disgrace he had shared, in the days of Queen Anne, was the text of most of his remarks. Walpole had not his brother's pride, but neither had he his merit: he was politically timid. I think he has not yet changed. He was so conscious of the superiority of Robert Walpole that he relied incessantly on the latter's example. There was nothing to add when once he had said: "My brother thinks thus." I was, at this time, an assiduous visitor of M. Lassaraz, agent of the Gray Leagues and of Basnage. This Lassaraz was a thorough Dutchman, apathetic, slow of wit and body; for the rest, his heart was open to all comers. Basnage, one of those men of genius lost to France through the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, is far more of a minister of state than of a parish, as also thinks His Royal Highness, who constantly writes to him for his advice. Basnage contributed in no small degree to the ratification of the alliance, and I busied myself in getting the confiscated property he had in France restored to him. Basnage occupied a post with the Grand-Pensioner similar to that of a King's confessor. His counsels were oracles, and in his sermons, imbued with such a pure morality, he ever sought to break down the aversion of the Dutch for the French. I sang his praises in my letters to Massillon: "Basnage," I wrote, "is no more Protestant than Catholic; he is a philosophic foe to superstition, and a friend of the Divinity. Like you, he speaks in such a manner as to win love for the religion of which he is the apostle; he abandons dogma in order to knock at the door of men's hearts. I look upon him as your precursor."

Père de Castagnère followed his vocation, which consisted of thwarting me in whatever I undertook. I went in such fear of this enraged Jesuit, that during my nightly absences I took my secretary with me, to give a diplomatic appearance to my proceedings. Twice a week, at nightfall, I threw round me a mantle of gray camlet, lined with black velvet, and, wearing a large hat, departed to seek relaxation after my daily labours. Ordinarily, the wily Jesuit awaited me at the door and cried to me: "M. Dubois, would you not like a carriage to be got ready

for you?" I went out without answering a word, and, after turning the first corner, sent Lavergne to go where God might lead him. I, on my side, went about my own business, and often did not return to the Hôtel of the Embassy until very late. Muddy, wet, weary, and almost shamefaced, I often had difficulty in effecting an entry, and the porter would cry for an hour on end: "Who is it? Where are you going? What do you want?"

The indefatigable Castagnère always answered for me; he ran up with a light, shouting louder than the porter: "Don't you see it is the Abbé Dubois?" I went to bed dismayed at these turbulent receptions, which gave rise on the morrow to a thousand epigrams.

I have not space to relate all the tricks this devil of a Jesuit paid me. I met him everywhere I went. I had relations of two kinds with Madame Dunoyer, who composed a portion of the *Holland Gazette*. This lady, who was no longer young or pretty or gallant, had abandoned France and her religion in order to have a pretext for leaving her husband, who kept her behind locked bars. Madame Dunoyer had lived by her own industry in England, and lived on that of her two daughters in Holland. She dwelt in the Château of Riswick with these two damsels, who were mighty well trained, as I know from experience. The mother, in the pay of the booksellers, as she had long been in the pay of her lovers, gained her poor livelihood by concocting libels; and I should not have been spared if I had not gilded her pen. Of her two daughters, the elder was under the Dutch domination of a rich and miserly merchant, as they all are on these coasts; the second, who was married last year to M. Winterfeld, in spite of her precious reputation, played the rival prude to her sister. Acting on her mother's advice, she had acted the innocent with such success, that the youthful Arouet came near to wedding her, which would have given her yet another dupe. The publicity the mother gave, I know not wherefore, to the intrigue, procured numerous adorers of this virtue at third or fourth hand. I pass over the nature of the services rendered to me by the girl; but Madame Dunoyer's were more efficacious and less dearly paid. Every three days I sent Lavergne or Duroy to Riswick with notes to be inserted in the *Holland Gazette*. These notes, on the principle that one manages one's own business best oneself, related to my negotia-

tions, and incense floated up to me, burned by my own hands. Maroy, like a lad of intelligence, took advantage of these visits for his pleasures: a courier goes quickly in his amours, especially with a daughter of Madame Dunoyer. Castagnère, who saw the *Holland Gazette* filled with my praises, suspected the motive of the excursions made by Lavergne and Maroy. He promised his uncle to bring him the written proofs of my secret manœuvres, and the Jesuit kept his word. He posted himself one day in ambush on the road Lavergne would have to take, under cover of a little sequestered wood. He had been careful to provide himself with a disguise and a devil's mask. He waited with confidence for Lavergne, who was beguiling his journey with sips from a bottle. He cried to him in a stentorian voice: "Miserable man! if you do not drop the papers you are carrying, I will take you down to Hell."

At these fearful words, the Jesuit shook the foliage and showed himself at a respectful distance. Lavergne, who did not believe in God, was afraid of the Devil, and did not wait to defend his dispatches. Castagnère picked them up with a laugh, whilst my secretary fled without looking back. He returned to me pale and half converted; I fell into such a fit of passion that I threatened to throw him into the Mardick Canal. But I soon learned who the Devil was, and my notes to the *Holland Gazette* were sent to the Regent, who only laughed. Since then I have frequently chanced to call Lavergne "the Devil's cursed secretary."

"Excellent," cried his Highness, when he heard me use this epithet; "at last Dubois is doing justice to himself."

This Lavergne caused me a heap of torment. His greatest offence was when he made an ink-blot, no doubt of malice premeditated, on the original of the treaty of alliance. I shed tears of rage. "Ah, Monseigneur," I said to the Regent, showing him this unhappy blot, "it is the only flaw in my embassy. I was in such despair, I came near to flinging myself into the Mardick Canal."

Finally, after all kinds of obstacles, the private convention between France and England, containing the projected alliance to be concluded with Holland, was signed at midnight, on the 28th of November.

"Gentlemen," I said to Cadogan and Walpole, "if I become King of France, I will remember your good offices."

"In the meantime," replied Walpole, "give us your absolute."

The greatest obstacle to the signing had been the title of *Regem Franciæ*, which Lord Cadogan insisted on adding in the Latin version of the treaty to that of King of England. This scrupulousness on his part arose from the dread he was in of being impeached by the Parliament on the slightest pretext. Holland was like to escape us, the agents of the Emperor had such a hold over the States-General. Impatient at these interminable delays, the Regent wrote to M. de Châteauneuf to abandon all proceedings if the Dutch Government did not appoint a day to sign. The Maréchal d'Huxelles flattered himself he would exasperate me by giving the initiative of the negotiation, through this letter, to the ordinary ambassador. I answered, on my own authority, that on the 4th of January everything would be signed, and arrived at that result by dint of prayers, ruses, and importunities. His Royal Highness received the news of the event on the same day as a dispatch in which poor M. de Châteauneuf informed him that everything was broken off. Poor M. de Châteauneuf has never forgiven me.

On the 1st of January 1717, at six o'clock in the morning, Lavergne, who was sufficiently clear-sighted to foresee the issue of my negotiation, came to offer me his congratulations and verses in his usual manner, with an emblem representing the ship of France floating at full sail beneath the influence of my star. The legend—*Hoc duce tute!* explained the intention of the author. He began in an emphatic voice to recite me his verses. In them he compared me to Hercules.

"Plague on you," I interrupted him after a time; "your flattery is a little strong for a poor man afflicted with a retention of urine. I would have accepted the eulogy twenty years ago, but to-day I will none of it."

"You hardly understand, Monsieur," said Lavergne, in great confusion.

I drew out my purse with a fine impulse of generosity which, however, gave way to reflection; I deemed it pernicious to encourage a secretary to write bad verses, and I made a feint to be playing with the strings of this tempting purse.

"Hercules!" I repeated, laughing in the nose of my poet,

who was mighty attentive to all my movements and the chink of gold.

"My dear Lavergne," I said at last, "here are six louis . . ."

"A thousand thanks, Monseigneur."

"Take them from me to Madame Dunoyer, who will be coming to compliment me this morning; do not forget it, my friend."

It took him more than a day to recover from his surprise; but he wrote me no more verses.

The final signing took place on Monday, the 4th of January, with the accustomed formalities. My joy was signalised in a thousand follies, and with tears in my eyes I embraced the meanest valets. I was paid a hundredfold for all my perplexities, and I compared myself with Theseus after his victory over the Minotaur. The Emperor was as scandalised at the comparison as I had been with that of Hercules. Truly, this Triple Alliance was no child's play, and I doubt whether any other would have attained his aim. The Regent complimented me in two letters, the one political, the other private. This last is from his own hand.

"My dear Abbé,—You have saved France; the Duc d'Orléans embraces you, the Regent knows not how to recompense you: I have informed the King of the brilliant service you have rendered him; he answered me with the innocence of his years: 'I did not think abbés were so useful.' Make haste to enjoy your triumph, for I feel your absence from the Palais-Royal. You have now to form a long alliance with life and health.

PHILIPPE D'ORLÉANS."

The Maréchal d'Huxelles and my detractors frustrated these noble intentions, and I was sacrificed. Meanwhile, poor M. de Châteauneuf, who was doing the honours of the treaty, gave a splendid dinner to the States of Holland and the agents of England. His kitchen was more skilful than all his diplomacy. Lord Cadogan had the place of honour, the seven deputies of the States-General were at his side, and I facing them, between the Marquis de Châteauneuf and Castagnère. The banquet was merrier than most of that kind; I gave a dash to the conversation, which abounded in agreeable and amusing incidents. These heavy Dutch machines laughed at my expansive gaiety, and Lord Cadogan gorged cheese without cessation. The day after this

festivity I was crushed by a rude and quite unexpected blow. Poor M. de Châteauneuf, who, at the dinner of the night before had regaled us to satiety with the story of Châteauneuf, the rival of Richelieu, received a private order from the Regent to go and negotiate a treaty of friendship and union with the Czar Peter I, who was then in Amsterdam. This was an affront upon me for which I felt aggrieved with His Royal Highness himself; but I have learned since that d'Huxelles and de Torcy had done everything—they were in such fear of my succeeding in this second and easy negotiation—to ensure that poor M. de Châteauneuf, after having had the honour of entertaining the Czar, should sign the treaty with the Comte de Golostin, the Baron de Scaffiroffet, and M. Tolstoy. It is true that the treaty was not signed until the month of the following August, after the negotiation had been drawn up in Paris during the Czar's sojourn. I confess that I did not brook this affront with patience. In the flush of my indignation I wrote with some brutality to His Royal Highness:—

"Monseigneur,—You know neither what you want nor what you are doing; ought you not to be content with the Triple Alliance, which assures your rights to the succession? Why amuse yourself with old wives' tales and such trifles? What good is the alliance of the Emperor of all the Russias, a rough clod of a carpenter, whose sceptre is a cudgel! Faith! I am overjoyed that poor M. de Châteauneuf was alone charged with this great undertaking; I should have died of shame; I would rather you sent me to China, or to the King of Siam: in any case, I wish for no other recompense than that of having been exempt from this nuisance, etc."

This letter much amused the Prince, who showed it about as a good jest. I felt I had been in the wrong, and I wrote again to His Royal Highness, to the effect that I should pine away like a fish out of water until I was back again at the Palais-Royal. The comparison of the fish out of water, which I had made in no bad intention, was the text for a hundred utterances of satire. People went so far as to name the fish.

However, I gave some days to rest and amusement; I went to Amsterdam with M. Wassenauer of Obdem, and other distinguished persons, to assist at the *fêtes* which were being given in honour of the Czar. I preferred the rôle of spectator to that of actor, and

refused to be presented to Peter I, who had asked to see the negotiator of the Triple Alliance. I bought in this town, whose commerce is tea, some porcelain and seven carriage horses. Before I started to return to The Hague, I received for the first time a letter from the King of England, which ran thus :

"You would do well, M. Dubois, to come about the 20th instant to Hellevoet-Sluys, where I pass on my journey to England. Besides the pleasure of seeing you, I propose to deliberate with you on several matters. Stanhope will tell you of the satisfaction I feel at the unanimous consent of the Seven Provinces. If I were Regent of France I would not have you so long a Councillor of State. In England you would be a minister three days hence.

GEORGE, KING."

It was with difficulty I restrained my joy under my dignity as a negotiator ; I had an access of pride at being in correspondence with a sovereign. I started capering like a madman, my letter in my hand, reading it to all whom I met—my secretaries, my valets, and even to mine host, who did not understand a word of French ; and the letter read, I stood on tip-toe as though to heighten myself, repeating, with an air of pride, "*George, King.*" It was one of the grand days of my life. Stanhope, who had reached The Hague on the 15th, and had not found me, rejoined me at Amsterdam. He came to ask that the private treaty with England, signed on the 28th of November, should be burned as being void ; I had not the courage to oppose him, and the holocaust was consummated at dessert after a huge banquet. Thence I repaired to meet *George, King*, whose affability was redoubled. The States of Holland, the foreign ministers, and even Madame Dunoyer and her eternal daughters, came to present their respects to His Britannic Majesty. Madame Dunoyer received a present of fifty guineas ; but all the honours were for me. King George kept me for two hours talking of affairs of State, and the esteem he had for my poor merits was even increased. In short, he invited me to come and see him at his palace in London, and I promised to do so. I followed him to sea for some leagues in his yacht, and I think he would gladly have taken me to England.

I did not think definitely of departure until I heard of the mission of Lieutenant-General Dillon, who had been sent to

Avignon to order the Chevalier de Saint-Georges to leave France. The execution of this article of the treaty was its ratification. I took leave of all the persons who had showed their good-will to me, and settled my accounts, which the scoundrelly Castagnère had swollen in order to annoy me. Although I ate at M. de Châteauneuf's table, and was often abroad, I found myself massacred with bills from the apothecary, purveyors, and the devil knows whom. I paid everything, only with certain deductions and erasures, for the sake of peace. But to revenge myself on all this herd and their chief, Père Castagnère, who wished to make a milch cow of me, I determined to give no gratuities anywhere. I took the opportunity when Père Castagnère was surrounded by all his servants to hand him a packet containing a hundred louis, begging him to distribute it amongst his uncle's people. Castagnère, without concerning himself with all the hands which were already extended, hastened to ask the advice of the Marquis de Châteauneuf, who forbade his household to accept anything from me, under penalty of instant dismissal. My packet was returned to me intact. I charged my groom, L' Huillier, to distribute my gratuities and to exact a receipt from everyone, because, said I, you are the sort of man to begin by yourself. L' Huillier could not tempt a simple scullion, as there was question of the terrible receipt, and the packet came back to me just as it had started. I feigned irritation, and made a tour of the ante-chambers, laughing in my sleeve, and saying loud enough to be overheard : "I am indeed unfortunate, that people will not take my money ! I have known those who would have gone to the rack but for the sight of its colour ; but no, it is a deliberate thing, I must needs leave like a mendicant friar." I summoned Bussière, *valet-de-chambre*, barber to M. de Châteauneuf, who had blooded and clipped me many a time.

"My friend," said I, "you are a Limousin like myself, you would not like to see me dishonoured, take this packet of a hundred louis and tell everybody I do not leave like a knave."

"Ah ! Monseigneur," replied the fool, "Heaven forbid ! I would as lief the devil as that packet. The ambassador has given us such severe instructions on the matter that one might really think your money brought the plague."

"Plague it!" quoth I, "here are rogues leagued together to be the death of me!"

At these words, uttered fiercely, I threw the packet on the ground; all the lous were scattered about the room, and Buissière made off for fear of succumbing to the temptation of picking them up. I wager the lackeys of M. de Châteauneuf looked upon me as the most generous of men.

After all the farewell embraces, I intrusted Sourdeval with my seven horses and a large chariot filled with merchandise; to Lavergne, my post-chaise, with all the papers of my embassy. The latter set off to await me at Mardick; the other was to accomplish the journey to Paris alone. As for me, I embarked on the States' yacht, which was made ready and decorated to receive me. MM. Basnage and Lassaraz honoured me by accompanying me during the voyage. The vessel left the port amid the thunder of cannon, the sound of drums and trumpets. I was above on the poop during this ovation, and I nearly injured my neck and spine by dint of bowing.

"Monseigneur," said Forceville, naïvely, "one would think these worthy folk were enchanted at your leaving them."

"Idiot," I answered, "do you not see that it is quite the contrary? You ought to be mighty proud to have for master such a man as I."

The yacht sailed all night. I spent it in talking of affairs with Basnage and Lassaraz. About five o'clock in the morning we reached Mardick; artillery and military instruments sounded my welcome. I gave large gratuities to the crew to drink to my health, and the Triple Alliance. Then, embracing my two travelling companions, I handed to each of them a cipher for our correspondence. Wearied by the cares of greatness and the glorious clang of trumpets, I descended at the Sign of the Prince of Orange, where, much to my surprise, I did not find Lavergne with my post-chaise. I swore against this delay, and, in the meantime, lay down for some hours. At dawn, in spite of the rigour of the season, I was at the window, watching through a spy-glass for my secretary's approach. At last my post-chaise arrived, covered with mud and much damaged. Lavergne told me, through his tears, that, having to cross a wooden bridge without a parapet, the carriage had fallen over into a deep ditch, and would have remained in the water if people in the neighbour-

hood had not extricated it with the aid of horses, strong arms, and ropes.

"Wretch," I said, "I shall wait till I am at Paris to curse your clumsiness; I have not time here; see that we start without more delay; I am in a hurry to arrive, alive or dead."

Just as I was stepping into my carriage, a wench from the inn slipped a strip of paper into my hand: "They want to kill you on the road."

Great was my perplexity at this vague and threatening warning. I was tempted not to risk the adventure without an escort; but Lavergne, who entered, changed my intention. He was clothed in a doublet lined with black velvet and ornamented with gold buttons. I was wearing a mantle of grey camlet without ornament. No one would have known the master from the servant.

"Lavergne, my boy," said I, "do me a service, and pass for me."

"What is the use?" he replied; "you are too well known."

"That is what we shall see; do not refuse to gratify this fancy, and I will forgive you with all my heart for wrecking my post-chaise."

This arrangement having been settled between us, I concealed myself in a corner of the carriage with my felt well over my eyes. The road seemed to me eternal, sempiternal; I did not breathe a word, but my ears were keen.

"Monseigneur," said Lavergne, "if anyone had a grudge against you, I should not profit by taking your place."

"Hold your tongue," I said; "don't trouble me, or, if you like, follow me on foot."

My fears were enhanced in the midst of the flats of Antwerp, and each moment I expected to see the assassins. I began to breathe when we halted at a hostelry in Antwerp, for dinner. Some pretty Béguines, who were there, dissipated all my terrors, and emboldened me to resume my own character.

"Monsieur," they said, "we are consecrated to God; do not cause us to sin."

"Do not blame yourselves," said I, "and do not be so cruel; I am ambassador of the Pope, and I will procure you pardon and indulgences from Rome."

"You—the ambassador of the Pope," said one of these doves.

"Without a doubt, my pretty, the Abbé Dubois."

"Ah! Heaven have mercy upon us!"

They fled away with a terror which brought back my own; I did not deem myself so well known.

"Monsieur," said Lavergne, "you want me to pass for you and act the contrary, or so it seems to me."

"To horse and away!"

I did not feel myself in security until Paris was reached. However, I have since pondered on this pretended warning, and I am convinced that it was Maroy's work; he was over-clever at playing tricks on me; or else my enemies had devised this expedient in order to detain me in Holland until they had entirely destroyed my credit for the negotiation of the Triple Alliance. In fact, when I had resumed my ecclesiastical livery, I hastened to the Palais-Royal, where I found His Royal Highness all ice to his "dear Dubois."

"Well, Abbé," he said to me ironically, "so you are returned; you must feel like a fish put back in the water."

"Monseigneur," I asked, "have you been in good health for these four months during which I have been deprived of the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Not altogether; I know not what evil fairy has cast a spell on me and laid me low (*horresco referens*!)."

"*Exorcisco te*, Monseigneur. Why did you not come to Holland?"

"Nothing was any good; and ever since then I have become a hermit. It has cost me a hundred thousand crowns."

"Faith, Monseigneur, you have no idea of economy; I would have had the wench whipped as a reprisal."

It took me no more than two days and four interviews to recover my former influence over the Duc d'Orléans. The Maréchal d'Huxelles had the trouble of his maliciousness for nothing.

When Sourdeval arrived with my baggage, I sent Lavergne with two chests of tea to M. Pecquet, First Clerk of Foreign Affairs, whom I had won over to my interest by little acts of politeness of no importance. Lord Cadogan sent His Royal Highness a present of two small barrels of Tokay wine, with a bag full of pebbles to put in the barrels as they were emptied. It was a precious wine; each bottle was worth at least a hundred livres. I did not wish this magnificent wine to become the prey of the

mistresses, or of Madame, who appropriated all her son's belongings. I persuaded the Prince that the wine would be in less peril in my cellar, and there it is still. I never open a bottle except on occasions of great gala; the Parabères, the Sabrans, the d'Avernes would have long since drunk it to the dregs, if I had let them.

On the 1st of April, His Royal Highness gave me the post of secretary of the King's Cabinet, rendered vacant by the death of M. de Callière, member of the French Academy, who had been plenipotentiary of France at the Congress of Riswick.

I put up with this April-fool's gift, in spite of a lieu of sixty-thousand livres which I was on the point of paying to Callière's heirs; but the Regent exempted me from this in consideration of the services I had rendered to the King in the Triple Alliance. In addition, I obtained a pension equal to that of my predecessor.

"Dubois is a man with a hundred hands," said the voice of jealousy.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE YOUNG KING—HIS PORTRAIT—ANECDOTES OF MADAME GORDON—MASSILLON'S ABSENCE OF MIND—HIS NOMINATION TO THE BISHOPRIC OF CLERMONT—THE VISIT OF THE CZAR — HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE REGENT — HIS VISIT TO MADAME DE MAINTENON—PETER I AND RICHELIEU

I ASSISTED at the transfer of the young King from the hands of women into those of men. The whole Court flocked to the Tuileries; His Royal Highness presented to His Majesty the Maréchal de Villeroi, his governor, and Fleury, his tutor, as well as the other persons who were to be employed in his education and service. The King had been weeping; he was sad and silent; to all the words of the Duc d'Orléans he answered by a motion of his head. The ceremony had not the brilliancy that was expected, and nobody obtained a word from the King except the buffoon Maranzac, to whom he said, with a smile: "Come and play with us on the terrace, and I will give you the order." This order was an oval and enamelled plaque, representing a star and the pavilion of Versailles, beneath which the Royal child used to play with others of his age; he distributed it himself to his favourite playmates. Maranzac went two days later to the rendezvous; but, instead of the order, the King fastened a bunch of leaves in his button-hole with a blue and white riband: these were the colours of the Order of the Terrace.

The King's sadness was due to the sudden separation from Madame de Ventadour, who never quitted him, and who, in the morning, had burst into tears and said to him:

"Do not be grieved, Sire; this evening I shall come back."

"It is very long," the child answered; "but you promise me to come back?"

"Be very good whilst I am away."

"How can you expect me to be good when you desert me?"

The King was for several days inconsolable at not seeing her, and the affection he showed gave rise to much comment, especially

CHAPTER XXXI

71

when it was noticed that he cared nothing for other women. This Madame de Ventadour is a cunning thing, who, old as she is, has fits of rejuvenescence; she has spent her life in gallantry, and I cannot refrain from the belief that she has given the King bad advice.

"Madame," he would say to Madame de Berri, "you are very pretty this morning, please kiss me."

The King is twelve years old at the time of my writing; he is of amazing beauty; I do not know a more charming child. His large black eyes, with their long curled lashes, have what one might call a fine outlook; his cheeks are the colour of apples; his mouth that of a cherry, and his skin is milky white. His flowing and wavy hair renders his expression more noble and less infantile. He displays his little figure when he walks with quite a royal air; and he knows what respect is better than any grand-master of ceremonies. What is remarkable, however, in a child who is, at least, as egotistical as all children, is that he is affable and polite with everyone, and his fits of naughtiness are not frequent. The Duc d'Orléans is the only person whom he is greatly in awe of, although that Prince affects the greatest respect for him. He is also very proud of his person, and when he can call attention to his pretty feet and hands, he is like a peacock spreading his tail. As for wits, he has quite as much as a king need have, which is mighty little, but accompanied by the necessary amount of assurance to pass off many clumsy jests as wit. Each day the flattering gentry needs a hundred voices to spread abroad the insignificant sallies attributed to the King, with revisions and corrections. Paris and the provinces have revelled in such and such of his *mots*, which are those of Fontenelle or Lamoignon. All that is left grand or gracious amongst our grand ladies presses round His Majesty in the hope of being noticed. They would be prepared to train him in no time; but the Regent, who hopes to maintain himself at the head of the Government, devotes all his care to prevent anyone, least of all a woman, from acquiring an empire over the King. Later on we shall look after his education as I did after that of the Duc de Chartres. Already he shows signs of a good disposition, as do all young princes in more or less degree; their birth encourages them to engender desires which they can satisfy. The King forecasts a great love for physical exercise, and skill in

whatever he undertakes. He rides well, dances well, and hunts with indefatigable ardour. He is high-spirited and obstinate in character, and the only spirit he possesses in a very marked degree is the spirit of contradiction. He will be a dangerous King, if he lives long enough. Heaven forbid that I should wish him any ill, poor child! but he has morbid symptoms which make me dread the age of puberty for him. At times his complexion, fresh-coloured as it is, grows dull and livid. He is seized with pains in the bowels which resemble the results of poison; Chirac has told me that he could not answer for his life. In case aught happens him, it is the Duc d'Orléans who will succeed to the throne.

For a long time past, Massillon had been confiding to me his hopes of a bishopric; he looked upon me as one of his most zealous partisans; a number of grand ladies were interesting themselves in his nomination, for the title of bishop gives no little importance to a preacher and confessor. He preached with that admirable facility we know; and he had Fleury's promise that he should preach the Lenten sermons before the King. I advised him not to pursue two hares at once, if one may be allowed to compare a bishopric with a hare, and persuaded him to devote all his strength to the Lenten course. He had many rivals, who were not his equals in talent, but who were upheld on all sides. Finally, I took him to Madame, who was always our *refugium peccatorum*. Madame, who hated me with such energy, that she would inform me of the fact to my face with ill-sounding epithets, has never refused me anything, so skilful was I in finding her weak side. She was growing old then, and becoming devout; her correspondence consoled her for her domestic troubles, and she was set upon living long enough to bury her inveterate foe, the Maintenon. Massillon was ill recommended by his friendship with me; but his words had an irresistible force in them, and Madame had much esteem for him ever since his funeral oration over Louis XIV.

In the gallery we met old Madame Gordon, great-aunt of Lord Huntly, and lady-of-honour to Madame. Unless I am mistaken, she died the very next day, from a fall she had on the hearth when she thought to sit upon her stool. Her whole life was a series of absent-minded actions, all of them diverting. Madame

used to ask for her coif to go to Court; Gordon would throw in her face whatever she had in her hand; Madame would laugh, and let herself be arrayed in the coif. One day, Gordon seeing the first chambermaid yawning, suddenly spat in her mouth, and that without malice or thought of mischief. Worse still befel her, and her reveries were misconstrued when she thought fit to lie in Monsieur's bed, thinking it to be her own. She was young then, and almost pretty. Madame laughed her heartiest laugh over it. As soon as Gordon perceived us from the chair on which she was seated, stringing pearls, she came straight up to Massillon, and, as she talked, began to undo the buttons of his collar; Massillon, as absent-minded as herself, paid no attention, and I let her alone.

"Madame cannot receive anyone," she said to us.

"On what ground, pray?" I asked. "Is she ill?"

"She was in 1689."

"Indeed! I am delighted that she has had time to recover"; and I changed the subject.

"Madame," cried Massillon, "what are you doing?"

Madame de Gordon's distraction had produced its effect, and Massillon found his toilette becoming, under her hands, by no means tidy. I burst out with a peal of laughter which aroused the worthy woman.

"Pardon me, M. l'Abbé," she said, whilst the latter repaired the disorder caused by her operations; "I am subject to such absence of mind. I took the buttons on your coat for the beads of a rosary."

"Madame," replied Massillon, naïvely, "God will remember your pious intention."

"Imagine, gentlemen," continued the good woman, who was as garrulous as she was absent-minded, "that I hurt myself recently without meaning it; I was abed, and was writing a letter to someone, which I had to seal; I set fire to the wax, and, applying it to my thigh, burned myself so badly that I still bear the marks. Would you like to see them . . .?"

This time Massillon was prompt enough to stop her just as she was preparing to show him her family secrets.

We entered Madame's apartment laughing; she made signs of the cross with her left hand while she wrote.

"Do not interrupt me, gentlemen," she said to us gravely,

going on with her writing; "I am relating a story so infamous, that I pray God to forgive me the scandal of it; 'tis the tempter who has inspired me to spoil my correspondence with it."

I could not reconcile Madame with such superstition; the once strong mind had become weak.

"Madame," I replied, "it is not your Royal Highness who is in the least the cause of our hilarity, but poor Madame de Gordon."

"Indeed," said she, laughing in advance, "some other huge freak; relate it to me, and I will embody it in this letter, which still only runs to ten pages."

I related to her in detail the welcome Madame de Gordon had given to Massillon, who blushed, as he completed the restoration of the decency of his toilette.

"Lord!" cried Madame, when she had finished laughing, "she would have stripped Monsieur to his shirt as innocently as possible. It is not the first time she has attacked the indispensable coverings, think no harm, I vow to you. I remember, in Monsieur's lifetime, in the Salle de Saint-Cloud, she stopped Beuvron, Captain of the Guards, whose height, as you know, was gigantic. Gordon never speaks to a man without playing with the buttons on his coat; but Beuvron was so tall that she could reach no higher than his waist, but little she cared: the conversation proceeded. Beuvron withdrew four paces to pull up his breeches. Gordon only discovered what she had done from the peals of laughter round her."

"Massillon is equally absent-minded," I continued; "he has told me that, having to preach at Sept-Fonds, he mounted into the pulpit, reflected a moment, and came down without having uttered a word, and thought he had finished his sermon."

"Since we are on that subject," said Madame, "I must not omit the story of my aunt, the Princess Elizabeth, Abbess of Hervord. She wanted one day to go to a masked ball, and instead of a mask asked for a chamber-pot, which was brought her. She took it by the handle, saying: 'Where are the ribands to tie it on?' Then, 'Oh, how nasty this mask smells—faugh!' She threw it on the ground, and, at the noise it made, discovered it was her silver night-pot."

These anecdotes had restored Madame's good humour, and I seized the occasion to speak to her of Massillon's pretensions.

She was so full of spiritual affairs, that she could be a useful aid to a seeker after bishoprics.

"My dear Monsieur," she said to Massillon, "you shall have your bishopric, but you must wait till another falls vacant. That of Nantes is promised to M. de Tressan; M. de Caumartin will have that of Vannes; there remain the Abbés de Mornay and de Louvois who are on the list. As for who is to preach in Lent before the King, I love to listen to you too well not to wish you to have the preference before any other. I promise you to look after it; as for the Abbé Dubois, I long ago made him Bishop of Charenton." *

"Coming from the Palais-Royal I should not notice any difference," said I.

"Always insolent, like a lackey of the Church," she retorted.

Massillon thanked Madame for being good enough to take up his part; I united my thanks with his. Two days later Massillon was informed that he was to prepare to preach before His Majesty in the chapel of Versailles every Sunday during Lent. He had already preached his first Advent in presence of Louis XIV, who said to him in a moved voice: "Father, I have heard many great orators in my chapel, I have been greatly pleased with them; in your case, every time I have heard you I have been greatly dissatisfied with myself."

I think I may say that Massillon surpassed himself in what was called his *Little Lent*; it was thus that kings should be spoken to in a bold and noble spirit of truth, expressed in a natural, energetic, and elegant language. I confess that certain remarks seemed directed against myself, and even against His Royal Highness. I reproached Massillon with this, before our common friend, M. Crosat, an enlightened amateur of the arts, who gave us delicious dinners in the midst of his medallions and engravings. Massillon (the preacher in him had disappeared at dessert) bantered me on my scruples, in terms that were scarcely orthodox, and drank two or three toasts to me in Cyprus wine.

"Massillon," said Crosat, "what we like in you is that if your moralising terrifies us, your manner of life reassures us."

The Regent wished to sift the matter; he summoned him and asked him why he treated him as an enemy.

"Monseigneur," answered Massillon, "La Bruyère has been

* The French Bedlam.

exposed to similar interpretations, his noted good faith has destroyed them; I beg you to undertake my defence against anyone who should wrong me by thinking me capable of an evil action."

Whatever Massillon may say, I do not doubt but that he had his secret views. The young King said to him, on going out after hearing him: "Father, I prefer your sermons to the ballet which M. de Villeroi made me dance."

Massillon, his sermon over, stationed himself at the door of the chapel, with lowered eyes, and incense was wafted up to his face. On Passion Sunday, the aged Baron, looking more grotesque than an ape in a perruque, displayed himself in the most prominent place in the chapel, and made grimaces, contortions, and gestures, from the exordium to the peroration of the discourse, which Massillon delivered in gracious and mellow tones. Baron was with another actor, to whom he said aloud: "Friend, this is a real orator, we are only comedians."

He returned on Palm Sunday, and was equally ridiculous; he played the part of amazement, ran forward to the preacher, took hold of his arm, and said, in a patronising tone, "Go on as you are doing, Father; you have a delivery which suits you; leave rules to pupils and the Dancourts."

Massillon amused himself greatly by imitating the mummer's countenance and his dulcet tones. "Withal," he added, "Baron judged me aright; for I remember that Père Latour, of the Oratory, asked me what I thought of the orators most in repute—Fléchier, Mascaron and Bossuet."

"I find a wealth of wit and talent in them," I replied, "but if I ever preach myself, I shall not preach like them."

In short, the Little Lent made Massillon's reputation and his fortune, and in the month of September, whilst I was in England, he was appointed to the Bishopric of Clermont, which the Abbé de Louvois had refused, owing to ill-health.

I wrote to the new bishop: "There needs must be a Heaven and a Hell, a Massillon and a Dubois; I regret I am not in Paris, for I should have obtained a bishopric, that of Besançon to wit, which has been given to the Abbé de Mornay, ambassador to Portugal; have I not been ambassador to Holland? Titles are not lacking me, and, if necessary, I will obtain the support of all the Regent's mistresses. However, I aim higher. I do

not lose sight of the fact that the College de Pompadour, where I completed my studies, has furnished the Church with four bishops and a pope. *Preach, preach until Pentecost*; I will give you rendezvous at the Conclave and elsewhere."

My forecasts have been realised, and although all my preaching is to swear in God's name and the Saints', I have left Massillon far behind me.

For two months the Czar Peter the Great had been expected in Paris; he was in Holland, engaged in unmasking the conspiracy of Goertz, the work of that mad dog Alberoni. The grand apartment of the Louvre had been got ready for His Imperial Majesty, who was travelling to acquire knowledge, and not to receive the homage of all the countries through which he passed. I had seen him in the crowd at Amsterdam; I was pleased to have an opportunity of studying him at first hand. He entered France so suddenly, that we received the news of his departure and arrival almost at the same time. The Maréchal de Tessé was sent to meet him with a large number of nobles, a squadron of the guards, and the King's carriages; but he was not further than Elboeuf when he was joined by the Czar.

"Monsieur," said he, "my fashion of travelling need not astonish you; I often go from Moscow to St Petersburg in four days, and the distance between those cities is at least four hundred leagues."

The Czar was accompanied by the Princes de Kourakin and Dolgorouki, by his Vice-Chancellor, Baron Schaffirof, his ambassador, Tolstoy, and his writing-master, Sotof, whom he used as a jester. There is not one of these illustrious personages but has not since been exiled, imprisoned, disgraced, or beaten with the knout. The Czar arrived at the Louvre in the daytime, but, being pestered with courtiers, poets, valets, and rules of etiquette, he asked for a place of refuge against these persecutions which he had not the right to put an end to with the knout, that habitual sceptre of Muscovite sovereigns. Villeroi, to whom this request was made, proposed his Hôtel de Lesdiguières at the other side of the town. The Czar accepted without any objection, took someone to show him the way, and, stopping up his ears, left the Louvre. He indulged in good cheer at the Hôtel de Lesdiguières, drank largely, went to bed and slept

like a good cit of Paris—that is to say, in great tranquillity. On the following day, the Duc d'Orléans, with the grand officers, went to greet him as soon as he was awake. I had taken the place of honour by the Regent's side.

The Czar Peter had a bearing and countenance as rigid and icy as the climate of his kingdom; he had a colossal frame, admirably proportioned, in spite of its leanness; his face was terrible, with his savage gaze, his piercing eyes, his bushy eyebrows, thick lips, his oiled black locks, and tawny skin. Excessive indulgence in strong liquors had given him a nervous affection, which was perpetually contorting his physiognomy. His movements were abrupt, his carriage haughty, and it was all of a piece. His voice had ever a tone of anger, and the majesty he affected took a savage and uncouth character. I know no man more anxious to learn, or endowed with greater intelligence. It was sufficient for him to see, in order to understand, and I have known him to correct explanations given him by artists and men of science. Wit he possessed, but it was steeped in the snows of his Russia. Bitter, sparing of speech, he only spoke to question, and without too much sacrilege against the French tongue. Of those in his suite, Tolstoy was the only one to express himself in French in a satisfactory manner. The buffoon, Sotof, whose privilege it was to say every conceivable folly to his master, without any fear of the correction of the knout, spoke and understood nothing but Russian. He was a dwarfish old man, with long white hair falling on his shoulders; his hideousness and deformity was insupportable to the eye, and his accent was like the croak of a frog. It seems that his sallies were diverting; for Peter the Great, who assisted at the comedy without a smile, roared when he heard him. In person, the Czar resembled a carpenter more than a great monarch. He was dressed with much simplicity, in brown cloth with gold buttons, without gloves, cuffs, and often without a hat. His officers wore uniforms after their own fancy; some adopted the fashions of Paris, others retained the national costume, with fur within and without.

There was an interchange of compliments between the Czar and His Royal Highness, who affected the superiority of civilisation; the Czar shut himself up in his Muscovite rudeness, and only issued from it after the first commercial and political

overtures. They conferred in low voices, and we removed to a little distance to leave them free. After a conference of a quarter of an hour, the Regent raised his voice, and the circle closed round them again. I did not expect there should be such speedy question of me.

"Monsieur," said the Czar to the Regent, "I have been told that you had a real friend near you, such as I had in the lifetime of my poor Lefort."

"Sire," replied the Regent, "I have no lack of true friends; here are MM. de Nocé, de Noailles, de Saint-Simon, de Canillac. . . ."

"I understand; those are faithful servants, but they are not friends. I speak of the negotiator of the Triple Alliance, the Abbé Dubois."

"Here he is in person, Sire; indeed, I love him as much I can love any man of wit and devotion."

"Sire," said I, in my turn, coming forward with a profound obeisance, "the name of M. Lefort, rendered illustrious by your august friendship, is known to all Europe, and I should never have dared to compare myself with him."

"M. Dubois," replied the Czar, "let envy have its voice; assuredly the friend of a Prince cannot be exempt from certain faults inherent to his condition, but it is still a title noble enough for you to be proud of. I congratulate you on having succeeded in obtaining the treaty of alliance from Holland to the prejudice of the Emperor; I should like to have some men of your stamp in my employ. Kings cannot make great ministers, but ministers make great Kings."

Sotof gave vent to a fit of laughter, followed by a sally in Russian, which made Peter the Great frown. Sotof subsided into a growling silence. I could have thought that the jester had had a scoff at Kings, who are belittled by the surname of *Great*.

The Duchesse de Berri arrived, like the Queen of Sheba, blazing with diamonds. She was flaunting in the centre of her guard, of her marvellously attired ladies, and the gentlemen of the Louvre.

"Is that not Madame d'Orléans?" asked the Czar, doubtless without malice.

"No, Sire; it is my daughter, de Berri," said the Regent, flushing at the insinuation.

The little Duchesse, at the very first interview, indulged in a display of coquetry which certainly kept the Czar in Paris twenty days longer than he had projected to stay. In less than no time, she was on terms of intimacy with his uncouth Majesty, who visited her several times in her palace. They had more than one nocturnal orgy, at which I was prevented from assisting by my retention of urine, and which were honoured by the active presence of His Imperial Majesty. Peter I, among other passions, had one for wine, which compromised his dignity by the most ignoble fits of rage. Nothing has transpired about these bacchanalia of debauchery, in which it was said the Czar grievously insulted the Regent, who so far lost his control as to threaten him with the Bastille. Madame de Berri, who keeps her head even at moments when the wisest lose it, caused the doors to be shut, and let no one leave until they had slept off their cups of the night before. With the day, the actors in this debauch swore a solemn oath never to divulge anything; the Regent, the Czar, and the Duchesse de Berri sealed the reconciliation with an embrace. The oath has been so well kept by all parties that I have never heard any further details on the matter; even the above have so strange an air that they might well be the work of calumny. It is certain, however, that since then the Czar refused to take part in the nights at the Luxembourg.

Two days after the arrival of the Czar, the King went to salute him with all the Royal family. M. de Villeroi, with his stupid care for detail, had arranged the ceremonial; it was a question of giving the King precedence over the Czar; the latter would not hear of it, and when it had been frequently repeated to him that he was to advance towards His Majesty, offer him his hand, and follow in his rear, he shrugged his shoulders and talked in Russian to his buffoon.

The King's visit had been debated in the Council; finally, M. de Villeroi was commissioned to escort him to the Hôtel Lesdiguières, where the Czar would come and receive him at the door. Peter I was informed that the Royal carriage was approaching. He stationed himself, as did all his officers, at the open gate; but, instead of conforming to etiquette, he suddenly caught up the child in his arms and kissed him, saying: "Sire, this shall not be the kiss of Judas." The wits scoffed at this Biblical phrase, which was accompanied by the frankest

caresses. They went up to the apartment, where two seats of like size had been placed; they sat down in them, and the young King showed no uneasiness at the Czar's bearded and severe countenance. Their interview was a protest of reciprocal friendship, and everyone noticed that His Majesty already made play with his personality. The Czar, in the interval which elapsed before his visit to the King, received the Town Corporations, who made speeches to him through the mouths of their respective chiefs. He repaired the same evening to the King, whose whole household was under arms. M. de Villeroi led His Majesty to meet the carriage of Peter I, who caressed him more than he had done on the previous occasion, and addressed these simple words to him:

"Sire, you are commencing your reign, and I am completing mine; I hope you will favour my successor with your friendship?"

"Are you so old already, Sire?" replied the King; "wait until your hair is as white as was my grandfather's."

"Alas! I am much afraid I shall not have the time to complete my work. As for you, Sire, I predict that you will surpass your grandsire in wisdom, glory, and power."

"I hope but cannot believe it."

The Czar dropped the subject, which discouraged his noble ambition; he would often say with sadness: "Unless I live to be a hundred, I shall not succeed in making Russia a flourishing empire."

His visits terminated, the Czar resumed his roving habits of life. He overran Paris in every sense, examining monuments, theatres, manufactures, pictures, and libraries. Dressed like the plainest citizen, followed by one of his officers and by Fontenelle, who had been privileged to please him, he took the first hackney-coach he found, and went in search of information. I much regret that the trouble by which I was then tormented deprived me of the pleasure of accompanying these expeditions of the Czar, whom I look upon as a great Prince, if not as a great man. Fontenelle would gladly have admitted me as a third person. I only met him at the Opera, on the day he visited it with the Duc d'Orléans; he slept through part of the ballet, after having drunk a glass of beer, presented to him by the Regent, standing, with uncovered head. When he awoke, I asked him if the spectacle was tedious to him.

"Quite the contrary," he replied; "but I preferred to sleep, for fear it should become so."

"Have you then, Sire, so much empire over yourself?"

"If I had not over myself, how should I exercise it over others?"

He did not visit the Opera again.

He went from one surprise to another, from enchantment to enchantment. The Duc d'Antin invited him to dinner at his palace in Petitbourg, and, when dessert was on the table, to the sounds of soft harmony, the curtains were raised, and the Czar saw his portrait painted after nature.

"Sire," said Antin, "you leave lasting memories behind you wherever you pass."

He was greatly bored with Madame, who lost all her natural gaiety from having to submit to the yoke of etiquette; did she not want to prove to the Czar that she was distantly related to him? At Sceaux, Peter I was received with such fine flattery in prose, verse, and fireworks that, on leaving, he asked whether the Duc and Duchesse du Maine were comedians. He especially admired the Hôtel Royal des Invalides, whither M. de Villeroi conducted him. Whilst the soldiers were in the refectory, he tasted their soup, and drank a glass of wine, with these words: "Your health, comrades!" He was present at several sittings of the French Academy and the Academy of Sciences, and the eulogy he made of them to Fontenelle, secretary of one of these Academies, may be attributed to Fontenelle alone.

"Monsieur," he said, "when I see the Academies, I changed in no way the opinion you inspired in me of them."

Peter I, knowing all the sciences, was in a position to appreciate all that he saw; he corrected with his own hand a geographical map of his realms; he performed chemical experiments with His Royal Highness, and himself drafted a plan of the Louvre. He did not forget the Gobelins, where he asked explanations of all the processes employed in the manufacture of the noblest tapestry in the world.

"Gentlemen," he said to the workmen, "you also participate in the glory of kings."

At the manufactory of Sèvres, he was offered some magnificent china, which he accepted, saying: "I need some specimens, that I may try and rival them."

He saw medals being struck in the gallery of the Louvre; one of these medals was let fall, as though accidentally; he stooped to pick it up; it was engraved with his effigy, name, and the inscription: *Vires acquirit eundo*. He assisted on several occasions at the sittings of the Parliament, and came away penetrated with respect and admiration for the ministers of justice.

"The laws," said he, "have need of support; respect is only felt for them in proportion to the respect they exact."

The most singular detail of this journey, after the manner of Pythagoras' to the Egyptians, was the Czar's visit to Madame de Maintenon. He spoke of the old lady with astonishment, and, whilst inquiring about her life at Saint-Cyr, let fall more than once the expression of *the Queen*; but he perceived that this title took people by surprise, and refrained from it. Finally, he sent to ask the Maintenon's permission to visit her. She was not likely to say no, and I would not wager that she did not think to profit by the interview. Fagon, a courtier, nearly a century old, showed his old, faded face to Peter the Great, and served as his introducer to the Convent. This Fagon tormented him the whole way with his book: "*The admirable Qualities of Quinine, confirmed by Several Experiences, with the Manner of Employing it in every form of fever, at any age.*"

"I will wager," said the Czar, impatiently, "that your book is not so long as what you have said about it."

They arrived at Saint-Cyr at seven o'clock in the evening. The Maintenon, having washed, and perfumed, and painted herself, went to bed and had all her curtains drawn; the ladies of Saint-Louis remained in the room for the sake of decency. The Czar entered, without speaking a word, drew back the curtains, and sat down by the pillow, considering the old woman, whose toilette made her some score of years younger.

"Are you ill, Madame?" he asked.

"Fagon starves me to death," she answered; "he even refuses me a broth."

"But what is your ailment?"

"My great age."

"That is an ailment for which there is no cure."

He said nothing more; but, as it was dark in the room, he came so close to the Maintenon that she cried: "Your Majesty makes me blush!" She took care to do so. As for the Czar,

he made no answer, but departed suddenly and silently. He never afterwards spoke of the Maintenon.

Before his departure, he went to the Sorbonne, and when he was shown the tomb of Cardinal de Richelieu in the church, he fell on his knees, embraced the statue, and cried: "O great man, why do you not live in my time; I would give you half my domain, if you would but teach me how to govern the other!"

I am sure this fine speech was not said in this form, and it was Fontenelle who took it upon him to revise it. Besides, if the Czar was so intent on having the Cardinal de Richelieu at such a price, I would have sold him to him with all my heart. The Sorbonnists, foxy brothers if any are, imagined they would make use of the Czar's visit in the interest of the Jesuits and the Pope; they drew up a memorial imploring him to reunite the Greek Church with the Roman; Peter I took the petition humbly presented to him by the doctors; nor did he lose his countenance when he handed it on to his fool, contenting himself with saying to him in Russian: "Sotof, this is your affair."

Indeed, a year later, he expelled the Jesuits from his kingdom in order to preserve it, and appointed his jester *Pope*, with a salary of two thousand roubles, to assist him to do honour to a sacred college, composed of fools, and always drunk on brandy. The Sorbonne wished the Czar to pay for the magnificent hospitality he received from the King of France.

Peter I carried few regrets away with him from Paris, but presents worthy of His Majesty; he only refused a sword set with diamonds, doubtless in order that he might not be compelled to give a present of similar value. He was not miserly, but he was poor. His journey cost him no more than sixty thousand livres; 'tis true that he had not to pay a dancing-girl at the Opera. He displayed so much esteem for me that I hesitated as to whether I might not follow him to Russia, where I should have been made Minister on my arrival; but dread of the knout, and my retention of urine, decided me to remain.

CHAPTER XXXII

RUMOURS OF WAR—ALBERONI CRITICISED BY DUBOIS—HIS ORIGINS AND MINISTRY—DUBOIS NOMINATED AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY TO ENGLAND—HIS GRANDSON—THE YOUNG MAN'S PREMATURE END—DUBOIS IN LONDON—DUBOIS' ILLNESS—THE HORSE AND THE MARE—DISPATCHES—DUBOIS' JOURNEY TO PARIS—HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND—ENGLISH POLITENESS—LORD STANHOPE SENT TO FRANCE—SIGNATURES OF THE QUADRUPLÉ ALLIANCE—DUBOIS' RETURN TO FRANCE

THE treaty of the Triple Alliance was not sufficient to prevent the war which threatened to involve the whole of Europe; the Emperor bore a grudge against England and France, because he had not been included in the treaty; Spain, governed, or rather ravaged, by Alberoni, thought only of revolutions. Philip had declared energetically against the Regent, and there was no doubt but that he would claim his rights to the crown. The Council of Regency was of opinion that the most expedient plan was to have recourse to arms; but I had little difficulty in converting them all to counsels of peace, which was indispensable to the welfare of the kingdom, and especially to the pleasures of the Palais-Royal.

"Wait a little, Dubois," said the Regent, "and we will see if there is any need to launch you once more into diplomacy."

Meanwhile, the knave Alberoni intrigued and agitated and bustled about; he had his organs of intelligence in the very cabinet of His Royal Highness; the Maintenon and the Duc du Maine entered all the more freely into conspiracies from which they hoped to derive immense advantages. Alberoni was not scrupulous as to what instruments he employed for his success.

I have never seen Alberoni, and he is one of the men I should have most desired to know. It is not that I consider him my equal; he is only a parody, a pale copy of me. I have been told that he is a little man, resembling me in face and aspect, cunning, amusing, and wide-awake; the portraits I have seen of him treat him somewhat better; certain engravings give him an impressive

physiognomy. As to his talents, he has several of divers kinds, good and bad; he imitates Satan in evil-doing, and diverts himself with the embarrassments, the vexations, and the misfortunes he causes: did he not consolidate the Inquisition in Spain? His preferred method is to act by raillery, even buffoonery, and I have often noticed that this course is infallible with the great, who like grave affairs gaily treated; he has perspicacity, audacious views; he bristles with cunning and *finesse* ; he knows the weak side of men, and the art of making them serve his purposes. He has always done great things by petty means. I see I am speaking of him as though he were still at the head of the ministry, in the King's oratory and the Queen's bed. I ought, on the contrary, to treat him as dead; for, since his shameful fall, his retreat to Rome, and his imprisonment in a Jesuit house, I do not think aught is left him but to write memoirs, or die the death of a repentant Capucin. Moreover, they write to me from Rome, he reckes little of kings and governments, and is only interested in the right employment of his vast riches. Doubtless, he expected to be disgraced sooner or later, since all his property was outside Spain. Had I wished, when he passed by the environs of Bordeaux without a passport, on his way to Antibes, I could have had him confined like a second Iron Mask. It would have been an act of justice, but I yielded to my indulgence, for fear of being accused of jealousy and cowardice; besides, one can pardon a defeated enemy.

Alberoni was the son of a gardener of Parma; perhaps he had been a better man if he had remained, like his cousin, cultivating and selling his vegetables! He took orders that he might live at his ease, became a curate, then, after the noble flattery which won him the favour of M. de Vendôme, shrunk from no villany or policy. I speak without prejudice; assuredly, the Cardinal Dubois has no reason to envy the Cardinal Alberoni. He formed an alliance with Campistron, the poet, whom he obliged with his purse; he soon supplanted Campistron as secretary to the Duc de Vendôme; he sold his first master, the Duke of Parma, to that Prince; he sold the Duc de Vendôme to Madame d'Ursins, Madame d'Ursins to the Queen of Spain, and himself to the highest bidder. I confess I am greatly scandalised at being compared with Alberoni, who commenced by licking folks' shoes and making cheese soup, especially as he did not know how to

die minister. He would have to be mighty adroit who would supplant me.

Alberoni was raising troops, building vessels, and preparing a war on the pattern of that of Charles V against Francis I. The Regent decided to unite with England, in order to frustrate these threats of Spain and the Emperor. I proposed to him to extend the treaty of the Triple Alliance to the whole of Europe.

"Peace," said I, "is like a sick man's convalescence; without it he is not cured; he languishes or dies."

Moreover, the vast operations of Law, who had just issued the Mississippi shares, necessitated two years of repose, if the commerce and finances of France were to be re-established. It was resolved that an ambassador extraordinary should be sent to England. I did not proffer myself, but I counted on my antecedents to speak in my favour; then I already knew England and its ministers, with whom I openly corresponded. This was the reason of those suspicions, as infamous as they were absurd, which accused me of receiving, in the capacity of a spy, one or two millions of English gold.

This has been said and written, and many people believe it; Saint-Simon, who spies monsters everywhere, except in his mirror, is no stranger to this covert rumour. Nevertheless, I was chosen amongst them all, and the Regent proved by his conduct that he did not doubt my attachment and fidelity. I did not start till I had taken all my measures.

"Monseigneur," I said to his Royal Highness, "I hope that the Abbé Dubois will return a minister."

"Of what?" he answered absently.

"Not a Protestant minister, be very certain."

I had summoned from Bordeaux, calling him my nephew, the son of that son whom God and the Président de Gourgues had given me; for that dear son had taken a wife before he was of age, and had died, leaving a solitary specimen of my blood. The young man had such bright capacities that I called him to Paris, where he died in 1719 in the flower of his age. He bore my name without attracting notice, and he always called me *uncle*. I had formed great hopes of him, which he promised to realise by his subtle and ready wit, his sound and right judgment, and his amazing activity. He loved me like a father, and made himself my partisan on all occasions. Why did I lose him? He would,

perhaps, have become a minister likewise. It was no apothecary's blood that flowed in his veins; and, just as my brother put me to the blush by his provincial blunders, so did my grandson do me honour by his conduct and talents. He had profited so well by his purse of 120 livres, which I had given him at the college of Saint-Michel, that he had become capable of assisting me in foreign affairs; he was the terror of the clerks, in spite of his mild and insinuating air, his timid manners, and his honeyed voice. He never let an error in a dispatch pass; he verified and examined all so minutely, in my interests, that my serfs of the desk called him the *Regent of the College*. He rendered me important services through the whole course of my negotiation, the burden of which he supported, deciphering letters, making extracts, going from his Royal Highness to M. Pecquet, from Pecquet to the Maréchal d'Huxelles, and keeping me fully informed of all that passed for or against me. But alas! good people do not live long; that is why, perhaps, I am not dead, in spite of my retention of urine and the rest. My poor little Dubois killed himself from overwork; he never went abroad, or moved, or exerted himself, except in fulfilment of his duty. He laughed as much at the notion of being notary, as if he had been the eunuch of a seraglio. He was economical, sober, and mentally equipped for anything. Towards the end of 1718 his health had so cruelly suffered that he was no more than skin and bones; he became a skeleton, lost his appetite, and went to Brives-la-Gaillarde to die, after a month of suffering and treatment. His loss was irreparable to me, and has afflicted me to the point of tears. My grandson had the key to all my domestic affairs. I counted on making a cardinal of him; and, at the time of his succumbing, I was asking the place of my friend M. Pecquet for him in foreign affairs. I should like to see my idiot of a brother of use for anything.

I needed a secretary for my Embassy; the Regent thought to select me for the post an author of some comedies that were scarcely comic. M. de Puyseulx, ambassador of France to the Thirteen Cantons, had asked His Royal Highness for some employment for a humble comedian named Néricault Destouches, who had made his *début* in diplomacy with all the affected coldness of a Protestant minister. This worthy man was foisted on me; I have got on better with him since, at a distance, 'tis true, for I shall leave him in England *in saecula*

saeculorum. Destouches is the gentlest and least venomous of diplomatists. He studies like a Benedictine, meddles with philosophy, and even with what does not concern him; for he is as inquisitive as a woman. I called him "the Curious Impertinent," after the title of one of his pieces. However, he is a poet with a heart better placed than that of most poets—sorry and roving weeds which grow in all soils.

I sent him off in the month of August 1717, after having traced out his line of conduct for him. In the following month my household followed him; and on the 12th of the same month I took the road with the more important portion of the Embassy; my courier, Maroy; Lavergne, my secretary; my *valet-de-chambre*, Manet; and Chef, my cook. As I drew near Calais I met M. d'Yberville, whose recall I had demanded, having been shown by experience how an ambassador extraordinary is harrassed by the ordinary ambassador. M. d'Yberville, who had stayed for several years in England with distinction, yielded his place to me with much politeness, and the advice he gave me did not fall upon a thankless soil. I lodged at Calais with the Chevalier de Molé, commander of the King in that town, where I waited four days for a fair wind and the last orders from His Royal Highness. I chartered a packet to take me to Dover, and embarked there with my people. That day I swore more loudly than all the sailors together, for it was nothing but an uninterrupted series of vexations. Sea-sickness gave me no rest; near a score of times we were like to join the fishes, who would not have received us as brothers. The landing was long, dangerous, and difficult; I lost half my belongings during it. I passed but one night in Dover to appease my fury, and did not stop till I reached London, in the quarter of Westminster, in Duke Street, where a large and handsome house had been taken for me, with a view of St. James's Park, from which it was only separated by a quick-set hedge. I went to bed, on my arrival, after supping; and in the early morning my indignation found vent in oaths when I was awoken by a serenade of trumpets and haut-bois, loud enough to bring all the citizens to their windows. Lavergne came in and informed me that these good people were conforming to the custom in honouring me in their manner.

"The infernal hubbub," I cried; "now they have started singing. Ah, how much sooner I would see them dancing on the gallows."

I paid three guineas to have peace. Lavergne had hands that were grasping enough to withhold at least a third of the money; luck for the musicians that he did not keep it all.

On the morrow, fresh and equipped, I commenced my visits under Stanhope's wing, who took me to His Britannic Majesty, where our acquaintance was renewed with fresh vows of friendship and devotion. I had determined not to be sparing of His Royal Highness's money, but to give brilliancy to my Embassy. I had brought all my silver plate and part of the enamel service of the King; a fine carriage was sent me, equipped with six white horses. At every post I received magnificent provisions of French wine and truffles from Brives-la-Gaillarde, which doubly tickled, by their aroma, my Epicurean senses and my patriotism. These wines, truffles, and other dainties, passed to the tables of King George and his ministers. I did not fail to go and pay my court to the King's mistress, the Duchess of Munster, a prodigious heap of flesh which bore but little likeness to a woman's shape. I adopted a tone of intimacy with her which would have carried me farther than I intended, if I had not respected His Majesty's amours. I was welcomed no less graciously by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who held their Court apart since the Prince had quarrelled with his father on account of the burly Duchess of Munster. I ever preferred to play the part of conciliator, and before my final departure I had had the honour of contributing to a restoration of this domestic intimacy. The persons I took most pleasure in seeing were Horace and Robert Walpole, Lord Cadogan, whom I had known when ambassador in Holland; my Lord Craggs, the favourite minister of George I; my Lord Sunderland, minister and one of the most influential leaders of the Whig party; my Lord Robertson, secretary to the Cabinet; the Baron de Bernstorff and the Comte de Bothman, German ministers, whom the King had nominated in his capacity as Elector of Hanover; Mademoiselle de Schulembourg, *persona grata* with Stanhope, the Countess of Kielmanseck, who had done me the honours of Great Britain on the occasion of my first visit; and, in a word, every woman who was akin to, or the mistress of, a minister. I knew from experience that it was more advantageous to negotiate with English women. This time I did not make use of Manet as interpreter; he would have had to have kept his pencil always in his hand. I employed the

valet of the Portuguese ambassador. He was a fellow of resource, speaking English well, and knowing London like his native town. I know not how he managed it, but he did not leave the household of his Portuguese Excellency unaccompanied. A pretty brunette, a mistress of the ambassador, passed over with him into my service; I have always thought that she was in his own. Be that as it may, she consoled me for the delay in my negotiations. I only received her by night to prevent people from talking, and would often go of evenings to sup with her, leaving my insignia of ambassador extraordinary at her door. When my fair wished to see me, she would come and parade in St. James's Park, passing and repassing, and making little signs in front of the window where I worked. It often happened then that I lost countenance, and my secretary was left gaping, pen in hand, until I had finished my correspondence of looks. But everything passes, even love, which helps to pass the time. I had a coolness for the space of a fortnight, during which my princess was forced to satisfy herself elsewhere. One day when I remembered the brunette enough to visit her, I found her *tête-à-tête* with a huge German officer, who, in his disgust at being disturbed, flung insults at me which I was not slow to return. He threatened me with his sword; me, representative of the King. I sent him to the devil; he bid me go where I would, and I found myself alone with the wench. I confess that my fury knew no bounds; for I attacked her with something rougher than words. She screamed; I redoubled my violence, and while I stormed I fell to my knees on the ground, like a lover making a declaration, but I had to be assisted to my feet, for I had been wounded in the leg. I was carried back to my hotel in a sedan chair, and was put to bed. Stanhope came to see me upon hearing of this, and the story I told of my sciatica, repeated by him to the Court and everybody, brought me visits and tokens of interest from all quarters. King George was not the last to send for news of my sciatica. When I was fit to walk, I reappeared at the Palace, leaning on a crooked cane, and groaning at every step. The King, who received me in his cabinet, inquired after my health, and commanded me to be seated, although he remained standing in order to write.

"Sire," I said to him, "we all have our ailments and indispositions. I feel that I am wasting away drop by drop."

"And I, M. Dubois," he retorted, with a smile, "I have not the power to rid myself of my Jesuits."

It was thus that he designated his piles. This cursed fall came near ruining my head and my health; I no longer had the strength to work and write a letter all in a breath; my presence of mind had quite deserted me, and I had some twinges of genuine gout as a punishment for having feigned it. English physic declared that I was to be thoroughly cleansed out. I had a week of nothing but purgatives. I was always occupied with this or with that, and to employ the time with profit I dictated my correspondence, whilst I was quite otherwise engaged. At one critical moment I commenced a letter thus: "In my present posture, Monseigneur, etc."—"Monseigneur!" said Lavergne; "it is not for His Royal Highness to poke his nose into that." My indisposition yielded to my remedies, and in a short time I felt well enough to mount on horseback. I often went thus to pay my respects to the King, who was living in his pleasure-house at Hampton Court. I took no one with me but my secretary, who dined with the servants. Horse exercise had been prescribed me by my doctors and I exceeded my prescriptions. I had bought a magnificent jennet with harness chased with silver. I paraded him at the Newmarket races. A little accident that befell me put me to more shame than a bad action had done. On a certain race day, splendidly attired in a jacket of violet velvet with ornaments, and a vest of gold stuff, I appeared on my horse in the midst of the ladies and gentlemen. The Duchess of Munster was riding a grey mare, which chance put in front of me; my horse pricked up his ears, neighed, reared, and, before the grooms had ran up, the insolent brute, thinking only of his amours, had overturned the Duchess. I was forgotten in this disaster, whilst succour was brought to the Duchess, who happily proved safe and sound. When attention was drawn to me, or rather to my horse, there was a roar of laughter at the embarrassing position in which I found myself, clinging on to the crupper and in danger of falling every moment; the Duchess herself began to laugh, and the universal merriment was prolonged until my mount was satisfied. In the end—for everything has an end—I recovered my equilibrium, but since then I have promised myself not to run the risk of a similar affront. Fontenelle, to whom I related this odd misadventure, declares that a like thing happened to the monk

Joseph at the siege of La Rochelle; I think one need not be a monk for that; a horse of the King of France would show no more respect.

Meanwhile, the matter of the Quadruple Alliance did not advance. Alberoni seemed in a conspiracy with everyone to oppose it; on my side I did not relax my zeal and efforts to bring it to a successful issue. I wrote dispatch after dispatch to the Council of Regency, to induce it to second my exertions. I carried on a correspondence in cipher with my grandson, whose secret mission it was to keep me informed of all that passed at Court; but as ciphers can often be discovered, I had arranged with His Royal Highness a new method of treating in letters of the gravest affairs: I had given to all the persons, who were in intimate relations with the Regent, strange names of which he had the key. *Saint-Pierre* was the Marquis de Torcy, whose love of peace made him resemble the good Abbé de Saint-Pierre; the *poet** was the Maréchal de Villars, because of his passion for verse; the *stranger to affairs* was the Maréchal d'Huxelles, president of the Council of Foreign Affairs; the *man of the pond in the Tuileries* was the Duc de Noailles, because, grown Cato by the grace of Providence, he fell into the pond in the Tuileries, when fleeing one night from a beauty who had designs on his purse rather than his virtue. This medley of enigmatical names had a singular effect, and in such a fashion I was not afraid of my correspondence being read. I rendered retail to my enemies what they had lent me wholesale, and gave them back a bean for a pea, according to La Fillon's expression. I was working skilfully for the abolition of the Councils of Regency. I still wrote frequently to M. Dubourg, who was in charge of French affairs at Vienna, and to the Marquis de Nancré, captain of His Royal Highness' Guards, who was in Spain for the purpose of inducing Philip V to join the Quadruple Alliance. It would have been quintuple in such a case, but I had a strong opposition to overcome, even on the part of the Emperor, who was less concerned with the advantages to be derived from the treaty than with his desire to make himself feared. Even in Paris, many people were banded together to frustrate my negotiations; His Royal Highness was justifying the proverb as to the absent being ever

* In the *Private Life of Cardinal Dubois*, it is stated that the *Poet* designated the Maréchal d'Huxelles. [Editor's Note.]

in the wrong; and I saw myself being sacrificed to petty politicians, when I asked for leave of absence in order to put my affairs right.

I reached Paris on the 24th of December 1717; I did not give myself time to change my travelling dress, and the Marquis de Noailles having come to fetch me in his carriage, I went to the Palais-Royal, where I met with a poor reception. But when the Chevalier Dubois had become the Abbé Dubois once more, I had little difficulty in warming the old kindness of the Prince, by dint of jests and confidences; I brought him round entirely to my own opinion in what concerned the Quadruple Alliance, and, satisfied with my work, set off again in the hope of being seconded or, at least, of not being thwarted in my plans. I was in London in the early days of January, and gave an account to the King and ministers of the Conferences I had had with the Regent; I showed them the new and plenary powers which had been bestowed on me in a letter from his Royal Highness, couched in the most tender and honourable terms. My credit was enhanced by more than one degree, and the negotiations changed their face to such a point as to satisfy me of their success. Meanwhile I continued to pay my court to the King, and, especially, to the ministers' wives. One does but need to know how to lay out one's money, be one prince of the blood or simple abbé.

I begged the Regent to purchase from La Fillon, who was more celebrated as a costumier than anything else, complete suits and *andriennes*, to be offered to certain ladies who would be of great assistance to me. The fashion of *andriennes*, which date from the first performance of Baron's *Andrienne*, had already gone out in Paris, almost as completely as Dancourt, who had started their idea; but I had no doubt but that the mode would be novel in London. His Royal Highness, who was large in his gifts, sent me more than I had asked for; whole pieces of brocade stuffs, as well as the *andriennes*. They were dresses relieved with cloth of gold and silver with ornaments, the fronts and sleeves garnished with gold filigree work. Some of them were stolen from me, as is customary, but the ladies who had the others would have kissed me for joy. The Duchess of Munster, who would put on her *andrienne* the very same day, looked like the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, she glittered so in the

sun. The good Prince had not forgotten me in his generosity, for the coffer contained for me a coat made of a mosaic of cypress and gold, highly chased with ornaments, and a vest of pearl grey and silver. I was seized with the coquetry of an old woman. I caparisoned myself from head to foot and displayed myself at my window which looked out upon St James's Park. A large crowd soon collected to look at me, and little vagabonds shouted in their English jargon that I was the King of China. They remembered me some days later, for during an excursion I made on the Thames with my Lord Craggs, the populace, which is ever against Frenchmen, thought fit to hoot me and throw mud and stones. Lord Craggs gave orders to arrest this scum; but at that very moment a stone wounded me in the head. I swore vigorously as I saw the blood flow, but for all vengeance they succeeded in arresting a blind man who was whipped in front of the Tower of London. If the stone came from the hand of this poor man it must certainly have struck me by chance.

Meanwhile, my enemies in France had got the upper hand; protestations of devotion had seduced His Royal Highness, who allowed himself to be circumvented, and d'Huxelles brought so many dark manœuvres to bear that he persuaded the Regent a second time not to sign the treaty. My grandson acquainted me with this upset, and I despaired before I was able to come to a determination. Finally, I composed a solemn petition against the Councils of Regency which were opposing my enterprises with this terrible persistence. The petition would have produced a great effect upon his Royal Highness; it finished in these terms, which were frank enough: "With only Dibagnet, porter of the Palais-Royal, with me, and with firmness, your Royal Highness will make himself more respected and feared than with thirty councillors, all known for flatterers and traitors; the Maréchal d'Huxelles by himself would suffice to do more harm to your dominions than war, pestilence, and famine."

In order to divert suspicion I conceived the plan of presenting my petition under cover of the Marquis de Nocé, and I wrote to him in addition, begging him to choose a good moment for showing the Prince my plan of government. Nocé, the rascal, examined it as a preliminary step, and seeing that his friend, d'Huxelles was not spared, he kept it and only gave it back to me on my return, saying that he had not a favourable opportunity

of employing it. I then presented it myself, and did well; the Councils of Regency did not resist my rhetoric. As for Nocé, in testimony of my gratitude, I exiled him for lack of aught better. He is a man whom I love better at a distance. I did not know what to resolve upon in this dilemma; my presence in Paris would have worked marvels, but I did not dare to ask for a second leave of absence; to send Destouches, who was only secretary of the embassy in name, would have led to nothing. At last I thought of Stanhope, who was to set off in the month of July as envoy of His Britannic Majesty. I hoped much from his address and eloquence; as it proved, he had no difficulty in convincing everybody that the Quadruple Alliance was highly advantageous to France. His Royal Highness, who knew him under the best auspices, cemented amid their pleasures an old friendship founded on mutual esteem; the Maréchal d'Huxelles grew quiet. Pecquet was, as usual, in my interest. Stanhope, by dint of solicitations, obtained His Royal Highness' consent to the signature of the treaty. Nothing further stood in the way of this signature, and the King of England no sooner received the news than he had it immediately carried out by Lord Craggs.

I was in a bad humour that day and found fault with everything. I was dictating to my secretary, who had already nearly had the ink-pot at his head for having made me repeat a sentence. I was walking to and fro the length and breadth of my room, my night-cap drawn over my eyes, and muttering to myself.

"Monseigneur," interrupted Lavergne, "do you wish to tell his Royal Highness that he does not know what he is doing?"

"Brute," I replied, "if I have dictated it, it is for you to write it without making observations; besides the Regent does not deserve all the trouble I am taking for him. If I did right, I should hand him back his papers and send him and his government marching."

I had not finished pouring out my bile when Craggs entered, crying: "*Signatum, sigillatumque est!*"*

My joy was delirious, I threw my cap in the air and rushed to embrace the Secretary of State with such vigour that I half choked him.

Stanhope was not long in returning from his mission which had been brought to so fortunate a termination, thanks to the

* The treaty is signed and sealed.

mediation of Pecquet, who had given proof not only of goodwill but of capacity. George I, who spared nothing to win him friends everywhere, offered this clerk a diamond that had belonged to Queen Anne, valued at fifteen hundred pistols. Pecquet, alarmed at an object of so much value, refused it, for fear he should be taken for an English spy. I should have had no such scruples. A fig for disinterestedness, 'tis a dupe's trade. I prefaced the final signature of the treaty with *fêtes*, rejoicings, and banquets, at the Regent's expense, all the more liberally as it was a question of doing honour to the King of France. I daresay that Chef contributed in no small measure to the success of my Embassy; this is what made me say that a good cook prepares peace or war amongst his pots and pans. In the course of this grave negotiation, I gave proof of a continence unwonted in me. I had no other mistress than a kinswoman of Lord Craggs, Sarah Bidding; and, indeed, she was more useful to me as a spy upon the Court than in any other capacity. She hoped that I should marry her; but I was careful not to run the risk of bigamy. I contented myself with rewarding her good offices with money, and I succeeded in obtaining from the Regent a secret pension for her, which she still gains on the same conditions. I should, perhaps, have consented to bring her to France, if she had not been smitten with Dubuisson, a French dancing-master established in London, and an agent of Alberoni. I am surprised he has not been hanged. Sarah Bidding was a comely enough person, whom I did not allow to be known, for fear of being suspected with her. The Chevalier Schaub, with whom I was intimate, in spite of his constant indiscretions, said, at a dinner one day, that I had a charming mistress; I was in time to stop him by these words, which gave rise to coarse innuendoes. "I have no other mistress than my secretary, Lavergne, and I cannot dispense with him, for we are always working together." I gave even a worse impression of my piety, by certain jests more Pagan than Christian; above all, by laughing greatly at the impertinence of my people, who, on days of worship, went into a cellar, whose grated sky-light looked upon the door of an Anglican church in the neighbourhood of my hotel, and thence gazed up in the air when the ladies passed with their large hoops. There are devout persons amongst Protestants as well as amongst Catholics, and the devout

Anglicans were much scandalised at my bored and absent countenance in church.

At length the treaty of the Quadruple Alliance was signed on the 2nd of August 1718, at the Secretariate of London. The ceremony was accompanied by all the royal pomp. The princes, bishops, and most distinguished nobles of England had the honour of signing after the plenipotentiaries. I ordered Lavergne to precede me to France and carry the original of the treaty to His Royal Highness, who rewarded him with an order for a thousand crowns. Whilst I was making my arrangements to cross the Straits, I learned with genuine despair of the refusal of Holland to form part of the Quadruple Alliance, the articles of which had no other object than the preservation of the tranquillity of Europe and the observation of the Treaties of Urecht, Baden, and Bâle. They were notified to Philip V, with a threat of war if he did not submit to them within two months. Alberoni did not lose countenance, but busied himself through his ambassador with efforts to break the alliance rather than see the adherence of Spain. His instruments acted at the same time in London, Vienna, Paris, and The Hague. It was on that side they had the best bargain; the treaty assured the Emperor the possession of Sicily, on condition of his renouncing his rights to the Spanish crown. The Marquis de Beretti-Landi, Alberoni's ambassador at The Hague, persuaded the States-General that the aim of the Quadruple Alliance was to impose its laws on the whole of Europe and to take sole possession of its commerce. Commercial motives outweighed all others; the Republic would not accept the conditions of the treaty; but the medal which Beretti-Landi caused to be struck, in memory of this refusal, that was not to be shaken at the time, only consecrated it until the following year. None the less, this check disgusted me with foreign negotiations, and I experienced the less regret in leaving my English friends.

Before my departure I patched it up with Destouches, whom I had to entrust with French affairs. The reconciliation was effected almost without a word, because we both saw our private interest in it. "M. Destouches," said I, "here is no question of comedies; I promise you shall be ambassador, if not in title, at any rate in fact; but I expect you to consult me in everything, and to assist me, if the need arises, to the utmost of your power.

For the rest, you have written a piece called *The Ungrateful Man*, and you will doubtless not fall into the error you have so justly assailed."

Since this period, Destouches has replaced the Chevalier Dubois in England. My comedian, as I call him, owes his fortune to me, and he knows that I have only to withdraw my protection to reduce him to a cipher. He bears a grudge against me, however, for having prevented him from accepting a diamond ring offered to him by George I. I prevented him from receiving it, in order to put him in his place; but my severity did not extend to a purse of five hundred guineas given him in lieu of the ring. After my departure, it was necessary to nominate an ordinary ambassador, and one was nominated; but I delayed the Comte de Sennectère, who was honoured with the title, so long, that he only started for England at the end of the year. This had given me time to instruct Destouches, who conformed in every respect. Every step of the Comte de Sennectère was spied upon, all his words repeated. He soon grew sick of this restraint and demanded his recall, which I granted him with all my heart. It was agreed that Destouches alone should be in charge of the affairs of France in England.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PROGRESS OF LAW'S BANK—COMPANY OF THE OCCIDENT—THE
MISSISSIPPI—M. DE CROZAT'S LETTER—FONTENELLE AND
LAMOTHE—SUPPRESSION OF THE COUNCILS OF REGENCY—
DUBOIS MADE FOREIGN SECRETARY—LORD CRAGG'S LETTER
—ABSURD SUSPICIONS

IN France, Law's bank was absorbing all men's minds, as it was absorbing all the specie, and I, who at a distance had not had time to be dazzled by the marvels of the Mississippi, was terrified on my return at the abyss into which the Scotchman was dragging us with his paper millions. I acquainted the Regent with my fears, but he reassured me, saying that France was very rich, and that to bleed her a little would do much good to her—"as well as ourselves," he added. Moreover, he repeated to me, we were not yet come to the point whither Law would lead us.

"Do you mean the workhouse, Monseigneur?" I asked. He went on laughing, and advised me paternally to buy shares.

Since the month of April 1717, the bank had been consolidated, to all appearance, by dint of decrees of the Council and edicts of the King. Law founded all the imaginary fortune which he shed over France, upon the edict making the bank depository of all the revenues of His Majesty. The huge detriment these bank notes did to the State notes made it necessary to create twelve hundred thousand livres of revenue to redeem these latter. Law needed an occasion to issue shares, and he founded them on the fogs of the Mississippi. M. Crozat, the father, to whom Louis XIV had made a concession of Louisiana for fifteen years, on condition that he should colonise it, knew not what to do with that country, destitute of commercial resources. He got nothing from it but a few skins, and thought no more of it; for experience had shown him that however rich he was, he was not rich enough to put under cultivation this almost uninhabited portion of the New World. He spoke of it one day in terms of contempt; Law, who was listening, said to him impetuously:

"Sell me your privilege."

"What would you do with it, M. Law?" retorted the honest Crozat.

And he entered at once into circumstantial details as to the position, extent, and productions of Louisiana, details which would have sufficed to disgust any other than Law. He persisted so obstinately that M. Crozat could not prevent him from ruining himself, and made over to him his rights over Louisiana on the most advantageous terms. This cession was approved by the King, who gave Law letters-patent for the formation of a commercial company, called the *Occident*, whose object was the cultivation of French colonies in North America.

Law touched the end he had proposed to himself, in conjunction with the Regent, who did not wish to enrich himself by impoverishing the State. The *Compagnie d'Occident* turned everyone's heads; people dreamt of nothing but millions. The capital of the company consisted of a hundred millions, divided into two hundred thousand shares, each one of which paid a dividend of twenty francs. This dividend was hypothecated on the farming of the registration of shares, on that of tobacco and the posts. On my return, the company was in full vigour; people fought for shares, and there were already fat lords and princes of the Mississippi, for it was a rivalry as to who should buy whole provinces in that distant country, at a price of three thousand livres the square league. Indeed, it was dirt cheap. Law, who had fired every brain with his paper madness, had made imbeciles believe that the value of the paper was invariable, since the sum to be paid was written on the notes, whereas the value of money varied in accordance with the edicts. To convince the incredulous, he gave them examples.

As for me, from the moment of my arrival, I was assailed by Law and the Duc d'Orléans, who wished to interest me in the Mississippi; but Crozat, the son, had spoken of it to me in such piteous terms, that I kept on my guard; I attached no faith to the fine descriptions cried in the streets, and on the hustings, in order to attract the colonists. As it was not possible to see for oneself, I asked my friend Crozat for notes upon this country of abundance, promising him to use the information for myself alone; and, the better to dispose him to an indiscretion, I made him a present of a superb picture of Rembrandt I had brought

from Holland. Crozat replied with the following letter, which I have preserved as a proof that I never bought shares except to speculate with.

"My dear Abbé,—If I thought I were speaking to anyone save yourself, prudence would seal my lips, for I think, in such times as these, it were better to speak ill of God than of the Mississippi. The name comes from a great river, which traverses it, and from which a host of small rivers spring. Louisiana is as large as France, and almost a desert; its climate is mild and damp, and greatly resembles that of England. Plantations would be costly, and yet uncertain; the attempts we have made have not been happy. However, I persist in believing that the vine and wheat would flourish there, and that cattle could be bred. But of what interest could these products be to our commerce? Furs are the only things to be exploited offering advantageous results. Otherwise, all that has been said of the country is false; my father would not have sold it so cheaply if there had been the most insignificant gold or silver mine. Aromatics, precious wood, silk-worms are not found. Finally, coffee, sugar, and indigo would not succeed on account of the rains, which last for months on end. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you on the matter and convincing you by word of mouth; it would take too long to do so with the pen. Believe me, your Rembrandt, for which I thank you, seems to me preferable to a hundred square leagues of Mississippi. This bank madness will come to an end, and the Compagnie d'Occident will ruin itself or everybody else.

"JOSEPH-ANTOINE CROZAT."

This letter, which I did not show to anyone, opened my eyes to the truth; I was not sorry that I had bought no shares except in order to sell at a profit. I may say that I was one of the first to realise the hollowness of the Mississippi bubble, perhaps even before His Royal Highness. Fontenelle and Lamothe, to whom I gave a dinner twice a week, and whom I employed on my correspondence, confessed to me that they were the authors of the superb tales that charlatans delivered in public places and on the hustings to dazzle the laggards.

"Law sought me out," said Fontenelle; "he offered me ten thousand livres to compose him a declamation in praise of Mississippi. I asked him how I was to speak of what I did not know."

"No matter," said he, "you were able to write the *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, and doubtless you had never visited them."

The reasoning was peremptory, and Fontenelle took up his pen.

Meanwhile the suppression of the Councils of Regency was being schemed at the Palais-Royal, without anything transpiring. At last, when all was ready, the explosion came on the 24th of September. The petty tyrants of the Councils were deposed from the Regency, and their confusion was so great that they hardly dared complain. I had been careful to see that my enemies should find themselves suddenly without employment in the Regency, which they had counted as ruling at their good pleasure and at their least frown. Their hatred of me was redoubled, and I did but laugh at it.

"Monsieur," I said to d'Huxelles, whom I met paying his court at the Palais-Royal, "if the Regent had taken any notice of my advice he could have made something of you; but whenever there is a war on anywhere I will send you to get killed with the best will in the world."

The re-establishment of Secretaries of State made the less disturbance in that I had chosen persons fit for anything, even to the ordering of a big banquet, like the fat d'Armenonville, who had the navy; Maurepas was made Secretary of State for the King's household; Leblanc for war; La Vrillière for internal affairs, and I for foreign affairs. I had chosen for myself what suited me best, and I kept under my thumb all the other Secretaries of State, who were more set on their offices than on the manner of filling them. They were poor heads enough, with the exception of Maurepas, who has too much wit for a minister, or at any rate makes too much show of it. As for finance, d'Argenson, who was controller, without the title, had the chief administration of the ten departments, which were entrusted to MM. Amelot, Pelletier des Forts, Pelletier de La Houssaie, Fagon, Ormesson, Gilbert des Voisins, Gaumont, Baudri, Dodun, and Fourqueux. I had devised this imposing array of names to impress the public, which would have been scandalised if His Royal Highness had touched the finances, the management of which concerned others besides himself. For the rest, these councillors were sorry financiers, except d'Ormesson, who plays

the part of Cincinnatus, despising fortune, and who refused to take any shares in Law's bank. The others are dullards, if not rogues. Fourqueux enriched himself at Bourvalais' expense; Baudri is a Jesuit, whom Linière, Madame's confessor, has thrust into finance; Gaumont and Dodun, creatures of the Parliament, intriguers whom it was necessary to humour; Fagon and Pellitier des Forts have as little heart as soul; Amelot and La Houssaie are imbeciles, who, nevertheless, know what is the interest of a crown lent at five per cent. In brief, in these metamorphoses there was material for causing a revolt amongst the ex-councils of Regency; but Law's millions made too much noise to permit attention to the murmurs of a few interested persons; the conspiracy of Cellamare finished the work of silencing the last complaints of hatred and envy. The Abbé Dubois, become Secretary of State, seemed taller by feet; so much so, that those who used to make a pretence of not seeing me in a crowd, came to salute my Excellency with protestations of devotion which would have made me laugh mightily if I had had the time. My new dignity was celebrated and ridiculed in prose and in verse. I wrote in an emphatic manner to my friends in London, announcing my elevation to them, and amongst several letters of congratulation I received, the following from my Lord Craggs is too flattering for me not to trumpet it abroad:—

"Monsieur,—The King received yesterday the news of your appointment as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He has commanded me to forward you his congratulations, and to tell you that it is the best news he has received since that of the signing of the Quadruple Alliance. Henceforward, he calculates that there will be no one to interrupt the terms of friendship and cordiality upon which he desires to live with Monseigneur the Regent; 'tis from now that I foresee His Royal Highness will triumph over all his foes; 'tis now that I expect to see like interests cultivated in the two kingdoms, so that there will be but one ministry between them. There may well be plenty of noise, but we shall heed it as vessels in a safe haven heed the noise of the wind against the rocks which surround them. Of my private joy, my dear Abbé, I will say nothing, for it is impossible for me to describe all I feel. My kinswoman, Sarah Bidding, is not the only lady who would desire your return here. . . ."

I could think of nothing more interesting than to parade my letter through the rooms and galleries of the Palais-Royal; I read it in a loud and intelligible voice; and I said to His Highness, who shook his head: "You see the high opinion His Britannic Majesty holds of me!"

Saint-Simon, in his obstinacy, said behind my back that this fine letter was equivalent to an authentic proof of treason; people laughed in his face, myself amongst the first. But the sentence *there may well be plenty of noise* excited suspicion in many people. When Alberoni's conspiracy was discovered, it was asserted that my Lord Craggs and I had been previously adverted of what was about to happen. Admirable policy! Dubois the accomplice of Alberoni!

CHAPTER XXXIV

SINISTER WARNINGS—DUBOIS VISITS LA FILLON—THE PARTITION—VISIT TO D'ARGENSON—THE REGENT'S CALMNESS—FIRST MEASURES—JEAN BUVAT—THE REGENT SURROUNDED BY CATS—LETTERS OF M. DE CELLAMARE TO ALBERONI—THE REGENT'S BLINDNESS—THE CONSPIRACY—ARREST OF CELLAMARE—DECLARATION OF WAR WITH SPAIN

On the 20th of November a letter from Basnage threw me into strange perplexity; it informed me that a rumour was current at The Hague, to the effect that Cardinal Alberoni was about to cause a revolution in France. My suspicions, at first, fell upon the Du Maines, but I found nothing to confirm them, in spite of the searching investigations of d'Argenson, to whom I confided my fears. On the 25th of the same month, Stanhope, in a letter which had been delayed on the way, since it bore the date of the 15th, warned me to be on my guard, and to watch over the person of the Regent, there being talk of Spanish projects against France. My anxiety was enhanced, but the Duc d'Orléans, to whom I confided my apprehensions, turned them into ridicule.

"My dear Abbé," he said to me, "what would you think of the state of my reason, if I were to tell you that the sun was on the point of falling and crushing you?"

"Monseigneur," I replied, "I should think you were poking fun at me; but if it was only a question of the fall of this palace, I should commence by leaving it, and not return until after the report of the architects."

"Do you want me to arrest the whole Court, and myself into the bargain?"

"No; but I entreat you not to go abroad of nights for some time to come."

I made this suggestion gloomily; and, disgusted with the ingratitude of princes, went, with the less fear of being assassinated, in that I should be taken for another, to tumble from the clouds

upon La Fillon, who greeted me with reproaches, to which I answered: "Blame no one, my dear, but Madame de Tencin!" This was the mistress of the Abbé de Louvois, who was going to become mine on the death of that gouty priest. She was already so in fact, and the Lord knows what reason I had to remember it!

"Alas, my son," said La Fillon, "what devil of a job have you got that one sees no more of you, night or day?"

"My girl," I answered gloomily, "a Secretary of State belongs to the Government from top to toe."

"Really! It would only want that to ruin me completely; what would become of me, good God! if all the King's people, presidents, councillors, officers, and grandees, abandoned me to the mercy of Heaven? Believe me, Abbé, the Tencin is less virtuous than we are."

La Fillon has the cunningest, gilded tongue that I know. I was so preoccupied with the bad tidings from London and The Hague, that I submitted to be shut up in a small room, and sat down by a partition, wrapped up in a host of notions which transported me far away from the place where I was. A voice of passing sweetness, which fell upon my ear and awoke me with a start, recalled me to the motive of my visit; but another voice, weaker and less distinct, proceeding from the adjoining room, abruptly changed my train of thought. I rose noiselessly from my chair, and, gazing severely at the person who had addressed me first, "Wretched woman," I said, "get into bed if you like, but behave in such a way that I do not perceive your presence, else you will rue it."

She wished to withdraw, but I pushed her roughly into a dark closet, where, with a gesture, I commanded silence. As for me, I returned to the place where chance had led me. When I had entered this blessed room, I had not expected that the part I was to play would be a political one. The partition was thin, and I overheard a part of the conversation which was being carried on on the other side.

"Drunkard," said a woman's voice, "you ought to blush for being in such a condition."

"What would you have?" answered a vinous voice; "I am flesh and blood, and subject to temptation; M. de Cellamare gave me four louis just as a gift."

"What a sum for a knave like you, who can't even read or write!"

"As for penmanship, it is my pride; the money was well earned, for I wrote some fine letters in Spanish."

"Do you understand Spanish, pray?"

"No more than I do Hebrew; but for that, I should not have been employed at the Embassy. There are secrets of State of which everyone ought to be ignorant who does not want to be hanged."

"The devil! It isn't all profit then, knowing these secrets; what is it all about?"

"Go and ask M. Porto-Carrero, who is leaving on the 31st of November for Madrid."

"Who is this Porto-Carrero?"

"Only the Cardinal's nephew, a great lord, with straw in his boots, a smooth tongue, and a purse fat enough to buy the crown and kingdom of the King of France."

"Plague! I should be mighty glad to know the nephew of a Cardinal! And will you be much longer working for the ambassador?"

"Oh no! It will be all finished before the year's end."

The explanation terminated in the inevitable manner, with a silence the interruptions to which were of little interest to me.

The conversation, only a few words of which I lost, was like a flash of light to me, causing me to perceive the depth of the precipice on the edge of which I stood. I had no longer any doubts but that the conspiracy was being concocted under the shadow of the Embassy of Spain. The Abbé de Porto-Carrero had been joined in Paris by M. de Montelón, son of the Ambassador of Philip V to England. This young man, who was on his way back from The Hague, where he had doubtless laid the mines, was starting for Madrid with Porto-Carrero. I saw in a glance all the springs of this infernal drama; but I had no proofs in my possession. Certainly I could have arrested the man to whom I owed these first clues; but, apart from the fact that his declarations would have thrown little light on the affair, the least noise might lead to the escape of the chief conspirators. I knew enough to be able to lay my counter-mines; I preferred to withdraw without scandal. As a preliminary, I went and released my fair prisoner, who was greatly astonished at the reception I had given her.

"Listen," I said in a low voice, giving her my purse, which she accepted as though she had earned it, "if you do not hold your tongue as to what has passed between us. . . ."

"Nothing has passed, Monseigneur."

"Very well! Not a word on the subject or—Fort-L' Evêque." I left hurriedly.

"Fillon," I said, on my way out, "tell my neighbour, from me, not to sing so loud."

"Sing!" she replied; "a pretty moment to choose! Of course, my door will be shut to him for the future; an interloping little secretary, a regular public scribe! . . . It is true, I am under certain obligations to him for his penmanship; but your Excellency does not suppose I should hesitate between him and you."

I hastened away from these encomiums for fear of being surprised in such a place. I took a hackney-coach, which conducted me to d'Argenson, at the Convent of La Madeleine de Trainel, where the old sinner had elected to reside. He was with his nuns; but the doors opened to my name, the spouses of Jesus Christ withdrew, and I was left in secret conference with d'Argenson, who was a good adviser when he was fasting. Unfortunately, the remains of a supper compelled me to hide the true motive of my visit; the idea next came to me that the worthy chancellor would be a man to do honour to my discovery, and I confined myself to vague fears, which he treated as old wives' tales. Before all else, I resolved to make the Prince my confidant.

On the morrow, at an early hour, I penetrated into the Regent's sleeping chamber, and this in spite of orders, in spite of valets, and in spite of the fearful cursing which resounded from the depths of the alcove when I opened the door. His Highness sprang from his bed, closed the curtains to conceal his mysterious partner from me, and cried to me in a great passion:

"The devil take you, Abbé; do you think you are at La Fillon's, that you enter without being announced?"

"Monseigneur, an affair of State."

"Good! As if there was not a time for everything! Remember that I am not the Regent until I am out of bed; you are speaking now to the Duc d'Orléans simply."

A little peal of stifled laughter warned me that we were not alone.

"If that be so, Monseigneur, it is to the Duc d'Orléans that I address myself, seeing that his life is in question."

"Why did you not say so at once, without all this preamble! Quick, what must be done? A sword—and we will see what happens."

"Monseigneur, I must speak to you without witnesses."

"Speak on, and have no fear of my betraying myself."

From the manner in which he glanced at the bed, I assumed there was a double sense in his words.

"Very well, Monseigneur, I have discovered a conspiracy of the Prince de Cellamare."

"A conspiracy, Abbé, and why, if you please?"

"I do not know, but an investigation will acquaint us with everything; only, I ask you as a favour to be careful in your actions, you are surrounded with snares and assassins."

"I am mighty well advanced by your revelations. I see neither plots nor danger; your desire to serve me must have made you take windmills for giants."

"I will accept your banter, Monseigneur, on condition that you act with prudence, until I have found the thread which will guide us through this labyrinth."

"We shall see who will be the Minotaur. As for Pasiphæe. . ."

He escorted me out with the manner of a man who needs his bed, and wished me good-night with as much coolness as if he had said good-morning.

It was the hour of the dispatches; Pecquet, who ordinarily opened them, brought me them all with the seals unbroken; I appreciated this deference, for a Secretary for Foreign Affairs ought not to hand over his correspondence to a clerk, even one with the talents of the estimable Pecquet. I found a letter from Robert Walpole, who begged me, in the name of His Britannic Majesty, to arrest a Spanish banker, who, after having made a fraudulent bankruptcy in London, had fled to Spain by way of France. I had heard speak of this banker, who was to accompany Porto-Carrero; I at once sent orders for his person to be seized. He had started that morning with Porto-Carrero and Monteléon. I had no reason to arrest them; but such was my fear lest Porto-Carrero, or at any rate his papers, might shortly pass out of my reach, that I dispatched couriers, under the pretext of arresting the bankrupt, with orders to seize all the

papers which were in the possession of the travellers. Maroy, whom I had included amongst these agents of justice, was to answer to me for their behaviour; he had arms which I authorised him to employ in case of need. I awaited the issue of this bold stroke with an impatience all the more keen, in that the spies stationed around the Rue Neuve des Petits-Champs, where the Spanish Embassy is, had as yet discovered nothing. Cellamare, who followed the joyous example of the Regent, was coming and going on his affairs of gallantry, that was all. I began to accuse myself of imprudence, or, at least, of too much precipitation.

Lavergne entered my closet with so composed and dignified an air, that one would have said he was carrying the Blessed Sacrament. He did not lose countenance at my bad humour, and when I had given him permission to speak, he shut and double-locked all the doors. For a moment, I thought that the rogue, bearing a grudge against me for some rebuff, was desirous of punishing me treacherously; I armed myself with a pen-knife, to be ready for anything, and the opening remark of the imbecile did not tend to reassure me.

"Monseigneur," he said, looking at me fixedly, and coming nearer to me the more I retreated, "what would you give to the man who should save your life?"

"It is according to circumstances; I could hang him just as I could offer him the half of my fortune."

"To be sure, Monseigneur; but if your days were threatened, and someone came to forewarn you."

"Are my days threatened?"

"I do not say that; it is a comparison to attain my end. It is a question of the Regent, and, perhaps, of the King."

"Do you know anything then about the conspiracy?"

"I do not, but one of my friends, for whom I ask your protection; as for me, you shall pay me according to the services I render you."

I questioned Lavergne, in order to discover whether he had any suspicion with regard to the conspiracy; but I recognised that the person who had used him as an intermediary to approach me had made him no confidences. He was a certain Jean Buvat, who lived up to his name by spending at the tavern all that he earned, and sometimes more. He had been a writer

in the Royal Library, but had been dismissed for drunkenness; he worked in the town, and, at the present moment, with M. de Cellamare, with other writers, of whom the man who had given me such valuable information without intending it, was one. This is how he had approached Lavergne, whose acquaintance he had made in the tavern or elsewhere.

He had sought him out that same morning at the Palais-Royal, to borrow some money from him, and he happened to say, with an ejaculation of sorrow, "Ah! how dearly Monseigneur the Regent would buy what I know!" Lavergne, who saw a chance of gain in this, wished to have his part; but Buvat, who was more cunning, wrapped himself in impenetrable mystery, confining himself to the statement that the King's life and that of the Regent were in danger. Lavergne, in order to earn his fee as an intermediary, offered to put him in communication with me, and the writer asked nothing better.

I ordered Lavergne to show him up to my room by the secret staircase, and I closeted myself with him. At any other time I should have cuffed his white, Jesuitical face, but it was necessary to put up with all his slowness.

"I was writer in the Royal Library," he told me; "my modest salary sufficed me; injustice deprived me of my place, and I had to look for work in order to live."

"To the facts, I beg you, my moments are precious."

"A friend suggested to me that I should enter the service of the Spanish Ambassador as a writer; I accepted like a hungry man, and when I was asked if I knew Spanish, I told a lie, and answered that I did not know that language."

(The nuisance! He will try my patience till to-morrow!)

"I am well paid, Monseigneur, I am well fed; but I see things which are directed against the Regency."

"Wretch, why could you not say so sooner?"

"I said to myself: 'If you betray the Ambassador, he will have you beaten to death; if you do not reveal your secret, you will be hanged for an accomplice.'"

"That is admirable reasoning; but, rogue, it is not before me that you have to talk any more about yourself."

"In short, Monseigneur, I have come to throw myself at your knees; I do not remember all that I have seen, but I have written down secretly in the secretariat of the Ambassador,

names, dates, and what seemed to me the most interesting to you. . . ."

"Give them me; give them me! Let me see exactly to what degree you deserve my gratitude. In any case, I promise your reinstatement in the Library."

"Remember, Monseigneur, that I am innocent!"

He was too anxious to make me believe it for me to credit him. I let nothing of this appear, however, and in the notes, which I over-ran greedily, it was easy for me to see that here was no hastily-made translation from the Spanish. I thought I recognised the style of my friend Fontenelle; a little reflection led me to assume that Buvat had doubtless been employed to translate from the French into the Spanish. I always had a talent for distinguishing handwriting, and that of a letter, insignificant enough in itself, seemed to me to be in that of the Abbé Brigaut. This gave me cause to suspect the House of Maine, in which this Abbé played a complacent part. Buvat, however, had suppressed names, forgotten important facts, and doubtless from design, refrained from accusing anyone French; what I saw clearly, was a plot, concocted by Alberoni with the great personages of France, to seize the persons of the Regent and the King, to cast the former into prison and impeach him, and to take the latter into Spain to be brought up under the tutelage of Philip V; as for France, it was to be governed by a Viceroy, who seemed to me, from the manner in which he was designated, to be the Duc du Maine; there was also talk of a convocation of the States-General.

"Bravo!" I cried, striking the table, "I hold the thread of the intrigue; the Abbé Porto-Carrero is perhaps arrested at this very hour."

"M. Porto-Carrero," interrupted Buvat, "I heard it said that he is on his way to Madrid to receive orders."

"Do you know anything more, my friend? Is the conspiracy ready to burst out?"

"Certainly it is; for M. de Cellamare refrained only last night from going in disguise to the Arsenal."

"To the Arsenal? Do not omit the slightest detail."

"For a month past, every night a carriage painted in dark colours, with a coachman who never gets down from his box, has called at one o'clock in the morning to fetch M. de Cellamare,

dressed as a simple citizen. From the place where I sleep I have overheard these words: 'Madame la Duchesse is waiting at the Arsenal.'

"Madame la Duchesse! You sleep, do you say, in the Ambassador's hôtel?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, above the little gate in the Rue Neuve des Petits-Champs. One night when I was retiring to my room without a light, some one tapped me on the shoulder, with these words: 'Pompadour, the Cardinal is asking for you in the oratory of M. de Cellamare.'"

"Thank you, my excellent Buvat; you must now return to the Ambassador and pick up all you can."

"Yes, Monseigneur; but if I am discovered I run the risk."

I halted just in time; it was imprudent to confide to such a wretch State secrets which he could stake on the dice and drown in a bottle of wine. The interest of the Government induced me to form a cruel resolve.

"Idiot," I said, with a laugh; "do you suppose I was not aware of everything before you, and of details with which you are unacquainted? You do not speak to me of the Duc du Maine, nor of the Duchesse du Maine, nor of the Abbé Brigaut, nor of Malézieux, nor of the Cardinal de Polignac, nor of Mademoiselle de Launay?"

"What! Monseigneur, you knew——"

"Can you doubt it now? Therefore, as the little you know is enough to hang a hundred members of the Court, you are going to prison. . . ."

"To prison, Monseigneur! Jean Buvat to go to prison! Is this the reward you promised me?"

"What, wretch! You have deserved the gallows for having conspired with the King's enemies. But I am willing to show you mercy in consideration of your repentance and your good intention; in the meanwhile, for fear you turn traitor, I must make sure of your silence at all costs. . . ."

The poor man was in despair, but a few louis restored his courage, and he submitted to be confined in one of the cellars of my hôtel. I had taken care that the cellar was not full. At bottom, I had a written memorandum on my mind, in which this Buvat said at the time of my embassy to London: "It is not thought in Paris that the Abbé Dubois will succeed in his

negotiations." I reproached him on the subject with "anodine" reproaches, as my brother, the apothecary, would say.

I hastened to the Palais-Royal; the Regent was playing with some kittens which had been sent him by his daughter De Berri.

"Dubois," he said to me, as I entered, "the metamorphosis of the cat and the woman is no fable; look at all these coquettes stroking me with their velvet paws."

"Monseigneur," I cried, "we have blown up the mine, and the Regency is saved!"

"Ah! What is all this litany, my dear scavenger?"

"I have all the proofs in my possession; the Spanish Ambassador, Alberoni, the Duc and the Duchesse du Maine are guilty, and many others as well. It is an execrable conspiracy."

"Once more, my prince of coxcombs, the only conspiracy I see is your own against my peace."

Without replying to this unjust reproach, I presented Buvat's papers, which His Royal Highness took coldly and examined without showing any trace of emotion.

"Well, well! Where are these convincing proofs, pray? I see nothing."

"What! Monseigneur, *oculos habent et non videbunt; aures habent et non audient.*"

"Yes, yes! I see that you are a man without courage, and I expect you to leave me in peace."

"Briefly, Monseigneur, order me to arrest M. de Cellamare. . . ."

"Are you mad, Abbé? Violate people's rights! Truly, to explain this violence of yours, I am tempted to believe he has robbed you of one of your mistresses."

"No, Monseigneur; but he aims at nothing less than at robbing you of the Regency, and, perhaps, of your life."

"A curse on your hallucinations! Listen, Abbé, if you do not discover the least little conspiracy for me, I will have you shut up in a madhouse."

This passed on the 4th of December; a message came to me that Maroy awaited me in my closet.

"Monseigneur," I cried, "here is the occasion to break down your incredulity; I hope to return with the list of all the conspirators."

The Regent returned to his kittens, I to my business, and I heard this blind Prince singing the song of *Le Roi Guillemot* and

La Reine Guillemotte. Such callousness distressed me. I was out of breath when I reached my closet, the door of which I barred.

"Maroy, my son," said I, seeking to read the news he brought me on his face, "what is fresh?"

"Your English bankrupt is arrested, and at Fort L'Evêque, Monseigneur."

"But the Abbé Porto-Carrero? The papers?"

"I will begin with the story of my expedition. I did not catch up the post-chaise until I came to a ford near Poitiers, where it had been upset; my assistants had been left behind, and I had the cunning to mingle with the peasants who had been attracted by the accident. Two lords, whom I recognised as M. Montelêon and the banker, were talking together anxiously; the Abbé Porto-Carrero was extricating the horses and wading knee-deep in the river in his efforts to right the carriage. 'Friends,' he said, in a strong but piteous voice, 'do not desert me; it is my papers—papers of the utmost importance! If I lose them I am lost!'"

"Ah! so he spoke in those terms," said I, rubbing my hands.

"The chaise having been rescued from its predicament, Porto-Carrero made an examination of it which redoubled his despair. 'Holy Virgin,' he said, with a groan, 'the casket has fallen into the river! Fifty doubloons to the man who finds it.' The peasants, all afire at the doubloons of Spain, the value of which was explained to them, entered the water and stirred up the sand, whilst the Abbé wept like a calf."

"And the casket?"

"We were never able to recover it, in spite of all our searching."

"Lost! Wretched knave! And I have been expecting you as a Messiah for this!"

"What about me, Monseigneur, who have perhaps lost with it the fruit of my expedition? To finish my story, seeing my men were coming up, I went straight up to the Abbé Porto-Carrero, and said to him politely:

"Monsieur, I have orders to arrest you."

"Arrest me!" he cried; "and what for?"

"As a bankrupt."

"It is not I," he answered, pointing his finger at his travelling companion, whom I accosted with the same compliment. The

King's people kept these gentlemen quiet. I entered the chaise, which I searched in the places where the Abbé had looked.

"Monsieur," cried he, "by what right do you lay a hand on my papers!" The other two said the same thing in Spanish; I neither heard nor heeded them. At last a cry of despair warned me that I had discovered the treasure, when I had raised a double bottom full of letters and papers; here they are. According to your instructions, I brought back the banker to Paris, after having asked pardon for the great liberty I had taken with the two Spaniards, who will not recover their breath after the fright I gave them until they get to Marseilles."

Whilst he was concluding this story I had already examined a portion of the papers seized, which seemed to me unimportant, and relating to bank affairs. But two fragments of letters addressed to Cardinal Alberoni made me utter a joyous oath; they are those I have had printed and published all over France, with other documents seized from Cellamare. I transcribed them from the originals, which Buvat told me were in the Ambassador's handwriting:—

FIRST FRAGMENT

"I have found it more necessary to employ precaution than dispatch, in the choice of means to convey these papers to your Eminence. Your Eminence will find two different minutes of *manifestos* (quoted Nos. 10 and 20) which our *workmen* have composed, believing that when the time comes to fire the mine, they will serve as preludes to the conflagration. One of these minutes relates to the insistence of the nation, the other discloses the grievances of the kingdom; and on that foundation lays the resolutions of His Catholic Majesty, and the petition which he must make for the convocation of the States. In case we are compelled to resort to extreme *remedies*, your Eminence will do well to examine the writing quoted as No. 30, in which our partizans propose the means they judge fitting, or rather necessary, to avert the misfortunes they see so nearly upon them, and to assure the life of His Most Catholic Majesty and the public tranquillity. Finally, I send in separate sheets, under the No. 45, a *Catalogue* of the names and positions of all the officers who ask for employment. . . . If war and violence force us to put our hands to the work, it must be done before we are weakened by the blows with

which we shall be assailed, and our *workmen* lose courage. If we are obliged to accept a feigned peace, in order to keep alive the fire beneath the embers, we must give it some moderate fuel; and if the Divine mercy were to appease the present jealousies and discontent, it would be sufficient to protect and gratify the principal *chiefs* who are interesting themselves with so much zeal and courage. Whilst awaiting decisive resolutions, I endeavour to retain their good-will and remove all causes which might weaken it."

SECOND FRAGMENT

"The principal *author* of our designs charged me earnestly, some months ago, to transmit to your Eminence the enclosed letter, and to join to M——'s recommendations the most convincing testimony. I have put off the execution of this commission until I had a safe occasion. I shall at once inform your Eminence that I hear this *subject* spoken of as a person of extreme merit, and that the interest the party takes in what concerns him is great. It has been suggested to me to introduce into His Majesty's service M——, who is a man of quality; and because he has been recommended to me by our *workmen*, I have distinguished him from the general *Catalogue*. These gentlemen have also told me that they can count upon M——; he is the person who was sent here by the Regent to obtain, so they assert, the rough draft of the *Catalogue*, and they would like to make even more sure of him by obtaining him some gratification or pension.

"With reference to the replies to my propositions of the first of August last, I must point out that the letters of credit required must be in the form of plenary powers with regard to the offers and demands to be made to the Parliament, the body of nobility, and the States-General of this kingdom. These plenary powers can be restricted by the instructions which will be given me for my guidance.

"When the time comes to put the hand to the plough, it will be necessary for His Majesty to write to all the Parliaments, conformably with the letter he has already written to the Parliament of Paris, which has remained in my own custody. In the present state of agitation some mischance might befall His Most Christian Majesty, and I have no instructions how to act; the Duc d'Orléans himself might *make a slip*. In what a state of em-

barrassment should I not find myself, owing to the new form which the Regency might assume, and as to whether it would be proper to facilitate or frustrate its views on behalf of His Majesty?

"M. le Duc de Chartres might pretend to his father's place, and, to surmount the obstacle of his youth, submit himself to a Council, similar to that which the late King constituted by his will. M. de Bourbon might also advance a claim, to the exclusion of the Duc de Chartres, to the absolute authority which M. le Duc d'Orléans now exercises. It befits us to provide for these contingencies, and to choose in advance the course which would be most useful for His Majesty's service; the zealous servants of France are more inclined towards the first than the second."

These letters, highly obscure as they were, indicated a plot formed against the Regency, the Duc d'Orléans, and the King's authority; the writings cited under different numbers pointed to further important papers, which were likely to contain all the details of the conspiracy; they were, doubtless, in that cursed coffer, for the loss of which I have never forgiven Maroy. I suspected the knave of having sold his master to Porto-Carrero, and it seems to me likely that the two fragments seized had been left inadvertently amongst the papers, which were quite irrelevant to the matter in which I was interested. I saw him change colour when I made the discovery of this important testimony. Later, I recalled to mind a fact which pointed to Maroy's treachery. A valet of the Abbé Porto-Carrero rode back at full speed to Paris immediately after the arrest of the banker, and warned Cellamare, who had time to destroy the papers which might have proved his guilt. Meanwhile, I was not at the pains to make a more detailed examination of the portfolios which had been taken from Porto-Carrero. I armed myself with the two terrible letters and flew to the Regent.

"Victory! Monseigneur," I cried, "we are going to convince your incredulity; I hold the conspiracy and the conspirators in my hand."

"Where the devil have you found these rags?" he asked, taking the letters which I presented to him.

"In the Abbé Porto-Carrero's luggage."

"What! Monsieur, you have dared, without my orders and almost without a pretext, to commit such a violation of rights?"

"Read, Monseigneur, and your reproaches will be turned into thanksgivings."

"No matter. Even if it should be a question of a project against my life, you have acted with unpardonable levity."

"Ah, Monseigneur, if you had only read Macchiavelli?"

"Well, well! What is all this lacquey's gossip about?" he asked, after carelessly glancing over the papers I gave him.

"What! Monseigneur, letters to Cardinal Alberoni!"

"If they were letters to the devil, I see nothing reprehensible in them."

"You are right, Monseigneur," I said in a fury; "whatever happens, I wash my hands of it."

I withdrew to my closet, lest I should strike His Royal Highness; I was choking with indignation; I was tempted to throw all the papers into the fire and await events; but I was dissuaded from this by the arrival of Madame de Tencin, who advised me to continue my investigations. I was so disgusted with my attempts to oblige people against their will, that I flung aside the papers of Buvat and Alberoni without a further glance at them. The Duc d'Orléans none the less persisted in his roving life, haunting the streets and places of ill-fame by night, supping and sleeping at the houses of his friends. Finally, news was brought me that there had been a fire at the Spanish Embassy, the cause being the burning of some papers. The unlucky conspiracy came into my mind; I looked again through Porto-Carrero's papers, and found three other scraps of letters which required no comments. A second time I thought I held the serpent by its head and tail. They were three letters in French, written by a practised hand, and destined to be addressed by the King of Spain to the King of France, the Parliament, and the States-General. The unworthy manner in which the Regent was treated left no doubt as to their origin; I recognised the hatred of the Duchesse du Maine. There was, moreover, at the end of the third letter, a "*Petition from the States to His Catholic Majesty*," to induce him to put himself at the head of the Regency. I was reminded of those amorous poets who write both the question and the reply. I thought I saw the hand of the Président de Mesmes in the following letter, in which this statement occurred: "Not only does the Parliament go unheeded in its wisest remonstrances, but the most respect-worthy subjects are excluded from the Councils;

howbeit they represent the truth, they are not listened to; and modesty forbids me to repeat the terms, as shameful as they are insulting, in which they are answered, when they have spoken to the King's officers; the registers of the Parliament will make a record of them for all posterity."

In truth, M. de Mesmes had once come with the red robes, I know not about what, to torment His Royal Highness, who had more need of sleep than of quarrelling.

"Go and be —," he had said.

"Monseigneur, we will make a record of your Royal Highness' answer."

The Regent laughed in their faces, and let them put on record what they liked.

I remarked one passage in which this worthy De Polignac had laboured for the love of the Duc du Maine: "It appears that the first care of the Duc d'Orléans has ever been to plume himself on his irreligion. This lack of religion has plunged him into licentious excesses the like of which corrupt ages have not seen. This, by drawing upon him the contempt and indignation of the people, leads us to fear at any moment the most terrible punishment of the Divine anger upon the kingdom." In conclusion, there was a number of horrors and calumnies against the Regent and his daughter. Arouet has never written anything so spiteful. This time, I said to myself, if His Royal Highness plays doubting Thomas any further, he ought to be shut up for a madman.

However, I did not venture to acquaint him with my new discoveries; I decided to confide all to Madame, who would know how to act, in default of her son. At the very moment I was on my way to her apartments, I heard Pompadour saying to M. de Laval in the gallery:

"That imbecile of an Abbé Brigaut has taken flight."

"Who knows that he has not compromised us!" replied M. de Laval.

They perceived me and saluted. These words seemed to me a fresh warning from Heaven. I concealed nothing from Madame, who trembled in every limb, crossed herself, and said, in a *De Profundis* voice: "The Maintenon would shrink from no crime!" She read the different documents with fresh signs of the cross: "See," she said; "this man of quality, designated as M——, can be no one but the old woman of Saint-Cyr."

It was thus that her resentment referred everything to the Maintenon, whom she called, in the language of Cellamare's letters, *the chief of the workmen*. We were at the 8th of December, and the Ambassador, secretly forewarned, had had time to make himself as white as snow.

"What is to be done?" asked Madame.

"Arrest M. Cellamare, and seize all his papers."

"That is the wisest course; we shall then get to know all his accomplices."

"In the meantime, Madame, keep His Highness in the Palais-Royal for fear of assassins."

She was in full dress, and I did not accompany her to the Regent. I went to make all my arrangements with d'Argenson and Leblanc. The better to spread my nets, I only spoke of the conspiracy with reticence, and it was decided that, with or without orders, we should proceed the next day to make an investigation of the Spaniard's Hôtel. I assured myself of Brigaut's departure, and sent men in pursuit of him. He was arrested between Nemours and Montargis. He wore a coat and peruke which gave him the look of a merchant; he was riding a horse which was recognised as coming from Cellamare's stables. A *rouleau* of a hundred louis was found in his pocket. He was escorted to the Bastille. At the same time, I wrote to London and The Hague to render an account of my discovery, and informed Stanhope that the Pretender might very well be found to be mixed up in this dark business. I had the Hôtel and proceedings of Cellamare surrounded by spies; and, surprised at receiving no orders, I ventured that night to call upon the Regent.

"Yes, Abbé," said the Prince brusquely, as I entered, "I will have him arrested, imprisoned, and condemned, if possible."

"I am pleased, Monseigneur, to find you in this frame of mind towards a traitor who is protected by the title of Ambassador."

"Towards an insolent fellow who dares to adore my daughter De Valois."

"In that, Monseigneur, I find him excusable, and it is impossible that you should not agree with me."

"That is my affair. To continue: I have seen my mother; I have consulted Nocé and Saint-Simon; I have decided to make sure of the Ambassador."

"Ah! Monseigneur, if you had only spoken so three days ago! None the less, you shall be obeyed to-morrow——"

"To-morrow? Why not to-night? He has written to Mademoiselle de Valois to ask for a rendezvous; suppose he were to profit by this last night . . .!"

"I do not think, Monseigneur, that he has much thought of love-making."

"I will not pardon him for his designs on Valois, as though there were not other women in Paris."

I took advantage of the Regent's good-will to make him write the following few words to M. de Cellamare.

"I beg of Monsieur the Spanish Ambassador, to call upon M. Leblanc about mid-day. M. l'Abbé Dubois will be there, on the matter of a Spanish bankrupt arrested near Poitiers.

"PHILIPPE D'ORLÉANS."

This letter was calculated to remove all Cellamare's suspicions, if he had any. On the following day, musketeers in disguise were posted in the cafés round his Hôtel; others guarded the approaches to the Palais-Royal. I lay in ambush in Leblanc's Hôtel, whither M. de Libois, an ordinary gentleman of His Majesty's, had been summoned to effect the arrest. M. de Cellamare arrived, suspecting nothing. He is a man of short stature, of a swarthy complexion, with black eyes full of Castilian pride; he affects the dandy in his garments, and talks of nothing but his conquests, which have rendered him mighty vain of his person; he speaks French badly, but in a very agreeable voice; he is bristling with spite, and nothing puts him out of countenance. He came towards us smiling, as if to show his white teeth. We rose in silence, and when the door was shut behind him, I removed the key, and called M. de Libois, who was in the adjoining room.

"Gentlemen," said Cellamare, "you seem greatly afraid of being overheard?"

"Monsieur," interrupted Libois, "I bear an order from His Majesty for your arrest. I am to escort you to your Hôtel, where a search will be made by the Secretaries of State requisitioned."

"It would be ungraceful of me," said Cellamare, "to resist His Majesty; but international rights are strangely violated in the person of the Ambassador of Spain. My sovereign will have his revenge."

"Monsieur," I replied, "you will be treated with the respect which is due to your political character; but you are accused of conspiring against the King of France."

"Is it you, M. l'Abbé, who accuse me?"

"No more than I defend you, Monsieur. Moreover, I trust that your innocence will be speedily established."

"So be it! Gentlemen, I am ready to follow you."

"Give your arm to M. l'Ambassadeur, M. de Libois," I cried.

"It is useless," replied the latter; "Monsieur has no wish to escape, because he knows it would be impossible."

The Ambassador's carriage was in the courtyard; we entered it, and a detachment of musketeers in disguise surrounded the carriage, which, with considerable difficulty, made its way through the crowd our coming had collected. The rumour was already abroad that the Spanish Ambassador had been arrested.

M. de Cellamare was, or appeared to be, quite calm; he even conversed of one thing and another with M. Leblanc. Myself, on the contrary, he did not even glance at. We descended at his Hôtel, in the Rue-Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, and, as the crowd was great, M. de Libois offered his arm to Cellamare, who accepted it graciously. The Secretariat was the first point of our investigations.

"M. l'Abbé," said the Ambassador, when he saw me emptying drawers and cupboards, "I hold you responsible for this unprecedented violation."

"As for you, Monsieur, you will be responsible for the conspiracy."

"M. Leblanc," he added, "I look to you to see that no paper belonging to my Government is abstracted."

I had no thought of that! To exempt myself from all responsibility I begged him to summarise everything that had no relation to the conspiracy; he agreed with a good grace, calculating that my researches would only end in my discomfiture. In fact, I found no clue, and I had the Ambassador's papers made into four parcels, which Cellamare sealed with his arms to be sent back to Spain. He was rejoicing under his breath at my disappointment, and Leblanc whispered in my ear: "My dear Abbé, your conspiracy is nothing but a *château en Espagne*."

Cellamare, to enhance my anxiety, took no notice of me, but conversed with M. de Libois.

"Now, gentlemen," I said loudly, "we are going to search the Hôtel from the cellar to the attics."

"You are singularly anxious to render yourself ridiculous," whispered Leblanc.

Cellamare was unable to hide his anger, which he relieved upon a statue; it fell, and was crashed to atoms.

"Sooner than I," I said coldly.

The perquisition was a thorough one, and lasted more than three hours; I had the floors and wainscoats removed; I was beginning to doubt the existence of the conspiracy myself, when I noticed a mass of the ashes of burnt papers in the hearth. I flung myself on the *débris* which had escaped the flames; one, especially, had been almost entirely preserved; I held the list of the conspirators! Cellamare turned pale and bit his lips.

"Monsieur," he said to me, "His Royal Highness has clever spies!"

I made a feint not to have heard him, and proceeded with my investigations. Leblanc laid his hand upon a casket containing papers.

"Leave that, M. Leblanc," said Cellamare; "they are the love-letters of all my mistresses; they are more in the province of the Abbé Dubois, on account of the trade he has followed all his life."

I had the seals put upon certain papers which appeared to me suspicious, and Cellamare had his Hôtel for a prison, with a guard of musketeers. In the month of January, he was escorted to the Château of Blois, thence to the Spanish frontier, by M. de Libois, accompanied by two captains of cavalry. They respected the Ambassador in him; my feeling is that it would have been a good deed to hang him. At this time, the Duc de Saint-Aignan, our Ambassador at Madrid, received orders to leave within twenty-four hours: Cellamare's arrest was still unknown, otherwise he would have met with less consideration. His offence was that, during the illness of the King, he had said that the testament which left the Regency to the Queen and Alberoni, would very likely be no more respected than that of Louis XIV. Alberoni turned redder than his hat.

After this vigorous measure exercised against Cellamare, further weakness was impossible; I goaded the Regent's good-nature so effectually that the preliminaries for the trial began, and further

arrests were made, until the Duc and Duchesse du Maine were sufficiently compromised to justify us in applying the same measure to them. I was charged with the affair of the conspiracy, and, at the same time, with the course to be pursued as regards Spain. I began by causing four thousand copies of the letters of Cellamare to Cardinal Alberoni to be printed, as well as the other documents seized in the Abbé Porto-Carrero's luggage. These copies were distributed through every province and to all the Parliaments. I took the initiative by sending translations of these letters to all the ambassadors and ministers of Europe, with a preamble and a letter of explanation which that dunderhead Lavergne composed in such a manner as to make me a laughing-stock. The preamble commenced with "As one who," the letter with "In order that." The mockers did not lose the opportunity of dubbing me the Prior *In Order That*, and the Abbé *As One Who*. I was not aware of this remarkable style until the letters had gone. But I took my revenge in my manifesto of rupture with Spain. In the memory of Secretaries of State no declaration of war was ever known to be written so academically. 'Tis true that Fontenelle had dotted the i's for me.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE DUC D'ORLÉANS' OBSTINACY—DESPOTISM OF THE ABBÉ BRIGAUT—PETTY CAUSES OF A LARGE RESULT—ARREST OF THE DUC DU MAINE—D'ANCENIS—THE GALLANT CORRESPONDENCE OF MADAME DU MAINE—LETTER FROM THE CARDINAL DE POLIGNAC—POMPADOUR—THE REGENT IN HIS ORATORY—ARREST OF THE DUC DE RICHELIEU—HIS PORTRAIT—THE GAOLER OF THE IRON MASK—THE REGENT AT THE BASTILLE—THE INSCRIPTION—END OF THE CONSPIRACY

THE conspiracy was flagrant; the Regent still hesitated. To believe him, everyone would have been left in peace, had it not been for Cellamare, who had to be punished for his love of Mademoiselle de Valois, who had nothing to do with the matter. I speak of the time prior to the arrest of the Du Maines. Madame, who saw all the atrocity of the plot, excited her son to severity, and would have liked to cast the Maintenon into a dungeon. I sought out his Royal Highness with all my documentary evidence, fully determined to fill the Bastille with all the malcontents I was aware of. I found the Prince suffering from his eye, his head resting on Mademoiselle de Valois' knees.

"Well, Abbé," said he, "what is your news? Has that insolent Cellamare been punished as he deserved?"

"He will not leave his Hôtel until your good pleasure; I have put the seals on his papers, and I bring you the most important . . ."

"The Spaniards have no suspicions?"

"But you, Monseigneur, doubt everything."

"No; I had him arrested when I learned of his designs upon La Valois. I ought by rights to give him the sole punishment of sending him back to his native land an eunuch."

"Monseigneur, he is not the sole author of the conspiracy."

"The devil take your conspiracy! I neither see nor want to see one; let them conspire at their ease, but don't let them dare to rob me of La Valois."

"What were these people's designs?" asked the latter, in a

nonchalant voice; "M. de Richelieu told me that they did not know themselves."

"It was only a matter," I answered coldly, "of assassinating you, your father, and the whole of the Royal family, excepting the Duc and Duchesse du Maine; of poisoning or imprisoning the King; of assembling the States-General, in order to proclaim Philip V King of France, and the Duc du Maine his Viceroy; of utterly revolutionising the Government. . . ."

"Dubois," interrupted the Regent, with a yawn, "I shall say to you, as they say in the 'Thousand and One Nights,'—Tell me one of those pretty fairy tales that you tell so well—that is to say, of a conspiracy."

"Well, Monseigneur, will you believe your own eyes?"

"My eye, you mean to say, for the left one is quite useless; it gives me a pleasant likeness with my cousin, the Duc de Bourbon!"

"Here is a list of the conspirators in the handwriting of the Prince de Cellamare."

"Ah! show me the paper."

I presented it to him, or rather he snatched it out of my hands, and threw it on the fire.

"Monseigneur! Monseigneur!" I cried, "you are destroying all our proofs."

"I do not wish to know the names of those who hate me; perhaps my conduct will persuade them to remain faithful to me. However, Dubois, I commend your zeal, and command you to follow up the affair, in order to influence people's minds."

"Here I am, thanks to you, in the same position I was in a month ago; even now, if only you would allow me to arrest the Du Maines——"

"Beware lest you do; Madame d'Orléans has begged me not to suspect her brother, and you will answer for him with your head. Otherwise, arrest whom you will—except the Duc du Maine. . . ."

"Except everybody! See, Monseigneur, were I the master, I should begin by arresting you, for you are certainly one of the conspirators against your person and authority."

Meanwhile, I none the less continued with Leblanc and d'Argenson to interrogate all who had been sent to the Bastille. The Abbé Brigaut, my former friend, seduced by promises of

mercy, confessed everything, and to make out his innocence, named a number of the guilty. He mentioned the Duc and Duchesse du Maine as the chiefs of the *workers*. Cellamare had had frequent interviews with them by night, either in Paris, at his hôtel, at the Arsenal, or at the Château of Sceaux. Brigaut even incriminated some Germans, who were high in Madame's favour; and the Duchesse d'Orléans, as well as her sister, the Dowager Madame de Conti, were not exempt from the slur of suspicion. The depositions of this black-frocked devil Brigaut were given with an infinity of evil, and the Regent laughed at them with his girls without attaching or appearing to attach faith in them. Brigaut went on to speak of the amours and gallant adventures of Madame du Maine, who was not over-scrupulous when a face pleased her. He named, amongst many others, the Président de Mesmes and the Cardinal de Polignac. He made such curious revelations on the subject of the latter, asserting that the letters which Madame du Maine had preserved would prove the truth of his statements, that His Royal Highness was not ready to give him the lie; his daughter, De Berri, maintained that the *Dwarf* would not have concealed her game so well; Mademoiselle de Chartres would not believe that a Cardinal could fall in love with a woman; Mademoiselle de Valois pretended that she had heard even more about it from Richelieu. It was necessary, therefore, to obtain possession of Madame du Maine's correspondence. Ruses and entreaties would only have served to put her on her guard against all our efforts; Madame de Berri suggested that the Du Maines should be arrested. This her father found a good joke, and he gave me full powers to act in consequence. I swore under my breath only to give up the love-letters to him, if I should hap upon a second list of conspirators.

I prepared my nets in such a way as to entrap both little and great. In playing the part of inquisitor, I experienced all the pleasure a man feels in avenging himself for injuries undergone in a condition that has long been vulgar. I drew myself up to my full height, in order to make those tremble who had crushed me with the weight of their superiority. The Abbé Brigaut would have had me arrest all Paris, if I had heeded him. I chose the 29th of December for the execution of my vengeance. I flattered myself that the capital *M* in the letters of Cellamare

was to be understood of the Du Maines; the Abbé Brigaut told me that it was the Chevalier du Mesnil. D'Argenson would have it to be M. de Magny, the maddest of all the Councillors of State. By arresting all three of them, I was sure of not making a mistake.

On the 29th, at an early hour in the morning, I sent La Billarderie, lieutenant of the body-guards, to Sceaux, with orders to seize M. du Maine, dead or alive, and to escort him provisionally to the citadel of Dourlens. M. du Maine showed signs of astonishment, which did not surprise me in so false a nature. He was only indignant that his wife did not follow him.

At the same time, I summoned M. d'Ancenis, captain of the body-guards, who used to cut as fine a figure at table or abed as he did at the head of his regiment. He had spent the night in debauchery, as his fatigued air informed me.

"I want you, M. d'Ancenis," said I, "to go and arrest Madame du Maine."

"Tis a singular coincidence," he answered, laughing. "I supped with her this very night, and the poor lady needs rest, I swear to you."

"She will have it at Dijon, where you are to escort her; but, as she is the woman to resist the King's commands, procure the assistance of two or three captains of the guards."

"All the more readily, as I shall have to keep my countenance before the Duchesse, who is asleep at the present moment."

It was ten o'clock of the morning. D'Ancenis, with three captains of his friends, repaired to the Hôtel in the Rue Saint-Honoré, where Madame du Maine had been residing since the arrest of Cellamare. D'Ancenis drove out the lackeys, and was the first to enter the bedroom.

"My God!" she cried, as she awoke, "why disturb my sleep like this?" Then, recognising her beloved d'Ancenis, "It is you!" she added; "are you made of iron then to return when one is reposing after the pleasures of the night?" She perceived the other officers, and cried out in terror, "Gentlemen, have you come to arrest me?"

"Madame," answered d'Ancenis, respectfully, "I should have wished the King's orders to have been entrusted to anyone rather than me."

"My dear d'Ancenis," she replied, "I will get up; but send these gentlemen away."

D'Ancenis assisted alone at the toilette, which took a long time, for I was waiting in an adjacent room; I was listening at the door lest she should make any attempt to escape.

"D'Ancenis," said she, "give me time to take my jewels with me."

"Willingly," said he; "I have received no order which need prevent you."

I went to intercept the Duchesse, who was asking everybody for news of her husband. I saw her face change at the words I addressed to her:

"Madame, you have no need of precious stones in the place to which you are going."

"Where am I being taken then?" she asked.

"To the Château of Dijon, to your nephew, M. le Duc."

"Bird of ill omen, it is you who have created all this hubbub; but wait till I am Queen of France, and I will have you thrown to the fishes!"

"Madame, I beg you to calm yourself. Those handsome stones will be safer here than at Dijon. There would be enough of them to open thirty of the best guarded prisons."

"There, fiendish Abbé," she cried, throwing them in my face, "there is enough there to pay all your master's strumpets during the whole time of my imprisonment."

I wished her a pleasant journey, and it was a mighty satisfaction to me to know her out of Paris.

Like Nero, I had not taken such a step merely to beat a retreat. That and the following days were marked by a large number of arrests, in accordance with the advice of the Abbé Brigaut. The two sons of the Duc du Maine, the Prince de Dombes and the Comte d'Eu, were banished to Eu, with one of the King's gentlemen to guard them; Mademoiselle du Maine, to Maubuisson; and the *Carissimo Mio* Polignac, seeing that the Councils prohibit the arrest of consecrated Cardinals, was restricted to his Abbey of Anchin, where, to kill the time, he wrote verse and prose to the little owl who was a prisoner in Dijon, and refuted Lucretius in the language of the shepherd Corydon. He came near dying of an amorous indigestion. Nor was this all, the Du Maines' people were divided between

the Bastille and Vincennes, with the other agents of Alberoni, Cellamare, the Maintenon, and the villainous hag Des Ursins. A German, Schlieben by name, in the pay of this last, had introduced himself into the household of Madame, who welcomed him on account of his wit and never flagging powers of gossip. He had fled in the public coach; he was recognised, owing to his being minus one arm, and from Lyons was brought back to Paris with all his fellow-travellers; he was only arrested in the courtyard of the Bastille, so that all these poor people thought themselves guilty at least of high treason, without knowing why. There was also another German-Silesian arrested, the brigadier Sandrasky. He was a coarse brute enough, who had married a pretty English woman, and lived on the profits of her beauty. His passion for gambling had induced him to accept money to betray the Duc d'Orléans. In a period of three months, I had more than a hundred persons arrested, which gave rise to a saying that even the King was not sure of his innocence when the Abbé Dubois was at the helm of justice. Nevertheless, I am sure that not one of the chiefs of the *Workers* escaped me.

It was impossible to catch Foucault de Magny, the introducer of ambassadors and an affiliate of the Jesuits. The good fathers secreted him in their houses, where eventually he took the vows. "The only wise thing that mad fellow Magny ever did," said Brigaut to me, "was to escape in time."

Brigaut, against whom there were no proofs beyond his own admissions, said that his papers had been handed to his friend the Chevalier du Mesnil. When the Chevalier was arrested, I asked him to account for the trust which Brigaut had committed to him.

"Monsieur," he answered, without ostentation, "I was convinced that those papers might play him a bad turn, and I burned them on my own initiative."

"You will reflect, Monsieur," I went on, "that you may be accused of complicity."

"It is true; but poor Brigaut will be all the more relieved."

The Regent saw a fine action here; I looked upon Mesnil as a cunning accomplice.

Davisart also was arrested, Advocate-General at the Parliament of Toulouse; Bargetton, an advocate, who had warmly supported

Madame du Maine in the affair of the legitimatisation of the princes; Mademoiselle de Montauban, who had played her part amid the delights of Sceaux, and called herself a maid-of-honour; Mademoiselle de Launay, favourite and friend, an intriguer with a pretty wit, chamber-maid and general henchwoman of Madame du Maine. She did not change in the Bastille, and her interrogation had a singular charm. Sometimes, we forgot, in charming digressions, our character of judges and Secretaries of State. I should have been mighty willing to finish the interrogation *tête-à-tête*. Fontenelle, Chaulieu, and a score of geniuses of the pen recommended her to me. I was careful to give her no reason of complaint; but it seems to me I should have taken a pleasure in seeing her condemned in order to have that of procuring her pardon. In fine, Madame Tencin was jealous of her, and never spoke of her except as my *learned lady*. I had obtained a pretty room for her in the Bastille, where she held her receptions. Madame de Tencin believed I had allowed myself to be seduced; however, Mademoiselle de Launay treated me as Minos; I know not who was ingenious enough to turn the name into Minotaur. 'Tis a hard thing to be a judge of ladies, especially of ladies who have wit.

The Regent was actually desirous of releasing all this company, when he had found what he sought—namely, the amorous correspondence of Madame du Maine and the Cardinal de Polignac! These precious letters, which are in my possession, were discovered in a secret drawer beneath the Duchess's bed. The Regent's daughters no sooner had this collection in their possession than they started to divert the whole Court with them. There were letters from thirty persons; they were read aloud at the reunions in the Palais-Royal, amid a thousand jesting remarks. Some one was malicious enough to send copies of them to the Duc du Maine, to relieve his dulness in his Dourlens prison. The little man had been vain enough to believe that his wife loved him without a rival. He was richly informed to the contrary, and his philosophy was brought up by this sad conjugal truth that marriage is only a step to obtain something else. He swore never to see his beloved wife again; she, on her side, swore to recover her lovers. Whilst he was composing his seven penitential psalms, the replies to the letters found at Madame du Maine's were published. The romance was complete. I

congratulated myself at having had this slap at the cheek of a Cardinal. It is from amongst the papers of Polignac that I garner this harvest of scurrilities against a Prince of the Church. These letters are forgotten now. I will select only one of them, with the reply. His Royal Highness insisted that Cellamare's conspiracy should be limited to a war with Spain, and to these trifles, which now seem to me all the more amusing since the reconciliation of the married couple. Madame du Maine took an oath to her husband that she had never failed in her duties! Here is a love-letter of Polignac's:

"Traïtress, the Scriptures say, 'Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing.' Your fair semblance is but a deceit. I have seen and know all. Would God that I was ignorant of it for my sins! Was I wrong in dreading the coming of the Comte d'Albert, who did not fling himself at your feet so promptly as you flung yourself at his head. Abomination! You were at the Opera Ball to meet him and break your troth with me! But Heaven will punish you for your evil thought, for, 'I am the Lord God, the God of vengeance!' That night, will you believe it, ungrateful one, I followed you to that profane ball, masked and disguised like any simple sinner? I saw you without being seen; I know to what a degree the Comte d'Albert loves you, and to what a degree you love him; but I, who have sacrificed everything for you, my fortune, and perhaps the papacy, love you all the more in that you are unworthy. What shall I say to you? I put up even with shame. Just as I was leaving the ball, with despair in my soul, I tore off my mask without reflecting on the imprudence I was committing; I was immediately recognised, and there was but one cry on all sides—doubtless it reached your ears: 'The Cardinal de Polignac in a domino!' I will not paint my confusion; I escaped amidst a shower of hisses, and, none the less, if you were still to love me a little, I would offer this humiliation to God, as a penance for my sins, etc."

This semi-ecclesiastical letter is too long to be transcribed down to the cross upon the forehead, the two shoulders, and the breast. The gallant epistles of the period contained nothing more comical. I am too honest, pen in hand, to recall the entire letter of Madame du Maine; here is her treaty of peace with the Cardinal:

"We are going to-morrow to the country, and M. le Comte d'Albert will not be there, but you only, without your red hat. I will arrange the apartments in such fashion that your room shall be near mine. Try to do as well as you did last time, and you shall give me absolution as well."

In this mass of epistolary rubbish, the following letter from M. de Mesmes in his judicial style especially delighted Madame de Berri, who exclaimed that the laws had to be obeyed.

"Madame, and only love, I beg to inform you that the Parliament desires to hold one of its extraordinary sittings in my Hôtel in Paris. We shall doff our red robes in order to inspire you with less respect and more love. The buffet will be well supplied.
"YOUR PRESIDENT."

Meanwhile, the conspiracy, which was to be seconded by thirty thousand soldiers disguised as merchants, smugglers, and monks, coming from Spain and Holland, was treated as a project in the air which had no likelihood of being executed. M. du Maine denied everything, Madame du Maine confessed everything; the others, by dint of speaking both of what they knew and what they did not know, embroiled the affair more and more. D'Argenson and Leblanc were busy with examinations which overlapped and contradicted one another. One might have said it was a fresh plot to increase my embarrassment. I ordered the arrest of Pompadour, who, to avenge himself, would have brought about the arrest of all France. Pompadour, who had married a daughter of the Duc de Noailles, belonged to the household of the Regent through his wife, who was governess to the Duc d'Alençon. He was a petty, tasteless spirit, a busybody, garrulous and self-important. The Abbé Brigaut won him over with four words, and Pompadour, who had nothing but debts, took money from the Des Ursins. He admitted this; but he accused this one and that one, with no other object than to cause vexation to people he detested. After his depositions, I was obliged to arrest M. de Laval, brother of the Duchesse de Roquelaure. "He served as a spy to Cellamare," Pompadour told me; "he had drawn up several schemes for an *Émeute*, and had been at the pains to collate all the letters; at night he would get on his horse and proceed to Sceaux or to the Arsenal." Certainly, Laval is an old rascal who wishes no good to the

Regent, and makes no secret of it; but getting on horseback is not his forte, for he is always ailing and covered with sores from the poorness of his blood; he is not often to be seen without a bandage over his left eye, and his arm is always in a sling; I would be equally loath to answer for the state of his mind.

I came and went; nothing was done; justice lay in a bog, and nobody had clean hands save myself, who had washed them of these delays. I sought out the Regent in his oratory, where he was fond of lying on a cushion made out of the hairs of his mistresses, or passing as such. I think hairs from heads that had known the hangman were not lacking. Still drunk from last night's wine, his complexion was flushed, and his eyes—or rather his eye, for the other was almost always in darkness—flaming. I was gaining in his esteem what I lost in familiar intercourse, because my age, my health and the duties of my office preached virtue to me, and I used to excuse myself as far as I could from the little suppers at the Luxembourg, Anières, and La Muette.

"Well, philosopher!" said the Regent, "how are you governing your anatomy?"

"As well physically as morally, Monseigneur, and the diet works marvellously."

"I know; your diet is Madame de Tencin. Tell me, Abbé, how do you manage always to love the same woman?"

"To that I will answer, How do you contrive to change every day?"

"My friend, I am twenty years younger, and more vigorous as well. Yesterday, by the way, we had our bacchanalia at Berri's."

"Monseigneur, my transformation extends even to my ears, which are grown chaste, and I have lost the trick of swearing, by God!"

"I perceive so. I end where I ought to have commenced. How is your conspiracy proceeding?"

"Faith, Monseigneur, they will hang nobody for another two months!"

"Come now, you are jesting? I do not refuse to prolong the imprisonment of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine, in the hope that they will amend; but I want all to finish by the end of the year in a general pardon."

"As you wish, Monseigneur; it will mean beginning all over again at fresh cost; but, in that case, why wait to empty the prisons?"

"Why? Because I intend to have Richelieu arrested."

"Order his arrest, and I know more than a hundred husbands who will give you thanks."

"I know some lovers too, who will not complain. . . . However, he is no handsomer than I am."

"No; you are Regent, and he is merely Duke; but the women prefer him."

"Alas! Dubois, what are you saying? To be brief, we will be gracious enough to send him to the Bastille as a conspirator."

"So be it."

"We have sufficient proof to deprive him of four heads. I have told him so; but he only laughs, and answers that if every lady he has betrayed were to ask him for one, it would not be too much for all the husbands' heads he has adorned."

"I am mighty pleased to pay some old debts on your account. M. le Duc has whistled away more than three mistresses from me."

"And what about me!"

"To be sure, I remember his name occurred in several depositions from which Mademoiselle de Valois caused it to be erased."

"Yes; we had our reasons for that; but it is said everywhere that this cursed Richelieu is secretly married to Mademoiselle de Charolais."

"Yet marriage is not his forte."

"We are irritated to the last degree, and we shall make use of a letter of Alberoni."

"Beware, Monseigneur, lest you are compelled to cut off one of Richelieu's four heads."

"Imagine it, Abbé, Richelieu promised to deliver Bayonne and Perpignan to the Spaniards, and if we had not kept him in Paris, the treason would have been done, in return for which the little Duc would have become a Prince of Spain."

"Monseigneur, you need not tell me that; I have my reasons for bearing a grudge against my friend, Richelieu, and I should be sorry for him were he to fall into my terrible hands. '*Minos in Hell pale human forms condemns.*'—For *Minos* read Dubois; *Hell* is the Bastille, and the *pale human forms* are our conspirators."

"We will give further orders when Richelieu is imprisoned. . . ."

"In the dungeon of the Iron Mask!"

"Do not speak so, Dubois; you make me shudder."

I divined Richelieu's grievance. I had been at war with him ever since he had robbed me of a certain dancing-girl, not to speak of others. This demon Richelieu was notable in amours; he had always received the first-fruits of gallantry either immediately after or before the husbands. Amongst his thousand *liaisons*, broken off as soon as they were commenced, Mademoiselle de Charolais and Mademoiselle de Valois had shared his hard, selfish, and ill-adjusted heart. I speak without metaphor. Mademoiselle de Charolais was a tigress; Mademoiselle de Valois a fawn. The latter, the darling of her father, who exhausted himself in satisfying all her caprices, loved Richelieu like a young lunatic. I have said that the Regent is singularly jealous in his affections, whether paternal, animal, or amorous. He would fain be the only one to be amiable and beloved. Richelieu introduced himself by night into Mademoiselle de Valois' bedroom, through a door opening into a cupboard, which was certainly not put there for him. He was surprised in one of his rendezvous by His Royal Highness, who gave way to his daughter's solicitations, and yielded his place to the lover. This was carrying a father's complacency somewhat far. However, he took umbrage at this intercourse, which he seemed to favour by permitting; and, to remove Richelieu, he appointed him to a mission abroad. Mademoiselle de Valois was so earnest in her entreaties, that Richelieu postponed his departure. The conspiracy of the Prince de Cellamare intervened. Richelieu, risking everything, retired to one of his estates, whither Mademoiselle de Charolais went to seek him. I will not dare assert whether or not he married her, but he would have committed bigamy as cheerfully as aught else; for one day, when they were playing Molière's *Festin de Pierre*, he said, without beating about the bush, "'Tis a fine character—that of Don Juan."

At last Mademoiselle de Valois, in despair at these rumours of marriage, which Richelieu denied with the air of a man who does not want to be believed, threw herself into her father's arms, to obtain reparation of the outrage her lover was putting upon her. It was with a quite natural eagerness that the Regent put Vincennes and the Bastille at his daughter's disposition. The *lettre-de-cachet* was sent that same day to his address; but it

was no fault of Mademoiselle de Valois if the fugitive did not escape the punishment which she had herself solicited. With the remorse of a woman in love she warned the Duke to fly, until she had procured the revocation of the fatal *lettre-de-cachet*. But Richelieu played the magnanimous—the offended lover; and to relieve himself, perhaps to avoid unfavourable presumptions, refused to fly. He even ordered his people to make ready his luggage as a prisoner—love-letters, locks of hair, and ladies' portraits. The police-officer arrived, thinking to surprise him, but was greatly surprised himself to be accosted in these terms: "Good-day, Monsieur; I was expecting you." I had given orders for the seizure of all the Duc's papers; but instead of politics I found nought but love. A portion of his letters were burnt by the Regent's hands; the rest were returned to him, and he made curl-papers of them, saying, "Now my collection is incomplete, I want to begin again." He had caused his mistresses to be painted in all sorts of monastic garments, and licentious devices, by the Abbé Grécourt, explained these fine pictures. I remember that Mademoiselle de Charolais wore the costume of Saint Frances, Mademoiselle de Valois that of Saint Theresa; the Maréchale de Villars was painted as a Capuchin, Madame d'Estrées as a Collatine. He spoke of them to me sometimes. "I have my saints and martyrs," he would say, laughing; "they are all that; but, as for virgins, there are none outside Paradise."

The Duc de Richelieu was not more than twenty-four years of age, with a girlish face; he was at that period what he is to-day, with the addition of four years and a beard. One might say of his figure, as of the Sunamite, that it has the elegance of a palm-tree; it is straight and flexible, with an infinity of grace in all its movements. I know a lady who became infatuated with him merely from having seen a back view of him. His face has the white and carmine tints, the refinement that we admire in women; his eyes have an irresistible charm; his taste, and the richness of his attire, set the fashion at Court. He has contracted a nervous complaint, which sets him apart from the common. Thus, when he speaks to a lady, he closes one eye, as if he were taking aim at her. He is perpetually saying: "I could give myself a kick in the backside!" One hand is ever at his sword-hilt, with the other he caresses his chin, like the beautiful Narcissus. His wit resembles his attire;

he changes it repeatedly, but that which he puts on is always as brilliant as that which he doffs. He does not lack education; and will repeat, for fear lest it be forgotten, "I translated Virgil with the Abbé Remy!" For the rest—principles, he has only those of the libertine; prejudices, only those of the *noblesse*; his virtue is but egoism. He is a man without heart or soul, and is nicely constructed to have lived alone with the serpent in the terrestrial Eden. I consider him a genius in his own line, capable of, or at least fit for, anything. He has the air of believing that he will never die. "I build in nothing but stone," he says, "because in sixty or eighty years from now I do not want to have everything in ruins."

He does not, however, do anything to ensure himself a long life in this world and eternal life in the next. He drinks and eats and breathes for women only; he needs them of every age and complexion. Twenty men would be satisfied with his ordinary; this makes me declare that he is moulded in bronze. None the less, married at a very early age, he has had the destiny of all the husbands of his acquaintance. He has not taken the matter seriously, and has even spoken of his equerry as the husband of his wife. The latter died of rancour. Under his garments Richelieu wears as a scapular a list of all the mistresses he has had, and many of them have inscribed their own names on it. This list, which he has shown me, begins with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the second Dauphine. Richelieu plumes himself on having had her as his governess, and afterwards as his mistress—a dangerous honour, which earned him a confinement in the Bastille when he was only sixteen. Amongst the innumerable names which this list contains, names of servant wenches and duchesses, kept women and princesses of the blood, occur the names of Madame d'Averne, de Guébriant, de Gacé, de Mouchy, de Polignac, de Sabran, de Nesle; it might be called a catalogue of the Court. Richelieu's worst quality is his friendship with Mauconseil, a man who would make a devil out of an angel. It is my mania to judge people by their names, and Mauconseil, which signifies *evil counsels*, promises no good. The poor Duke entered the Bastille as though making a triumphal entry into Rome. It was the third time he saw it so nearly. I am assured, however, that on the road he was astonished there was no one at the windows to see him pass.

I spent whole days at the Bastille with Leblanc and d'Argenson, who, seeing that the affair did not advance, sometimes absented themselves; but I persisted in my investigations and conclusions. Pompadour and the Abbé Brigaut were promoted to be accusers. Amongst those detained there were some whom I took a pleasure in torturing, threatening them with the supreme penalty. This was part of my revenge; in my heart I wished these imbecile conspirators no great harm. I said to Malézieux, who used to mimic my expressions and my language to amuse the idlers of Sceaux: "Monsieur, when I have got your head cut off, I shall defy you to imitate me. Even now, it is not you who can amuse yourself at my expense." In my daily visits to the Bastille, I did not forget the Iron Mask, who was reported to have died there. At the Court, it was believed he was still in confinement there; and the Regent himself was so convinced of it, that immediately after the death of Louis XIV he repaired to the Bastille to find out who he was. The governor confessed his ignorance of the matter; he even seemed to doubt whether that mysterious prisoner had ever existed. His Royal Highness smiled sadly, and raised his eyes to Heaven. This is what an old gaoler told me, who added, with a shake of his head:

"I, Monseigneur, saw the man in the Iron Mask on the day of his death."

"You have seen him," I interrupted, fixing my eyes on the hideous and deformed old man, as black and sinister as the walls of the dungeon. "You have seen the Iron Mask?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, as I see you. M. du Junca—and a good man he was, as discreet as the Bastille!—was then lieutenant of the King. M. de Saint-Mars arrived from the Iles Sainte-Marguerite to take over the government of the Castle. He brought with him in his carriage a tall man, well-made and well-dressed, wearing a mask of black velvet."

"An iron mask?"

"No, Monseigneur. I know what I am saying; but I can answer to you that it was a velvet mask, which he never removed even at his meals. During the four years that this prisoner was living in a room in the Tour de la Bertaudière, where he was treated like a prince, I saw him often, and once without his mask. M. de Rosarges, who seemed much attached to him, and never let him out of sight, was taken ill whilst M. de

Saint-Mars had gone to Versailles, whither he was summoned every month by the King. M. Reilh, our surgeon-major, assumed the post of custodian to the unknown; I saw the latter at the window of his room, making signs as though to attract attention. I had time to observe his features, which appeared to me to be those of a man of forty; only, his hair seemed to me quite white. He only showed himself for a moment; I presume that M. Reilh having fallen asleep, the prisoner had profited by this slumber to remove his mask. M. de Saint-Mars said to M. Reilh on his return: 'You should have killed him; the King would have approved you.' I always imagined the man in the mask to be some great lord. He was served from the governor's table, and on silver plates; all those who approached him spoke to him with respect, and hat in hand. At last he fell ill, and was delirious; he talked loudly, so much so that everybody was dismissed, even the sentinels. M. de Rosarges shut himself up to weep. By order of M. du Junca, who never left the room, I went to inform our almoner, M. Giraut, who, at first, refused to confess the dying man; but, by dint of threats, he was constrained to it. M. de Saint-Mars went every morning to Versailles during this illness, which lasted a week, and the Abbé Giraut said mass in the room of the masked man. Suddenly the rumour spread that he was to be transferred to the dungeon of Vincennes; but there was nothing in it, for he died that night, and the body was at once removed for interment in the cemetery of Saint-Paul, which receives our dead. No precaution was spared which might destroy any chance of revealing his identity. M. du Junca had his furniture and linen burned, and his room whitewashed. I ventured to speak of this prisoner to M. Reilh, who said to me: 'It is a state secret; any one who discovered it would be lost; but this secret is buried with him.'

"Are they not afraid lest anyone should disinter the body?"

"What would be found?—a stone in place of a head! It would take a mighty clever man to identify him in such a condition."

These circumstantial details, which I acquired almost without questions, struck me so forcibly that I took them down in writing as they fell from the lips of this gaoler, who had no interest in deceiving me. I asked him if any other witnesses of the facts he had related to me were in existence.

"Of course," he said, "we have prisoners who were here in his time; but their testimony cannot be called, because they have seen nothing outside their dungeon walls. As for MM. du Junca, de Saint-Mars, de Rosarges, Reilh, and Giraut, they did not survive the man in the mask long; they all died within the space of a year."

I questioned him in order to discover whether he had forgotten in what room the wretched man had been confined.

"It was the third in the Tour de la Bertaudière, Monseigneur; it has not been occupied since; I can take you there at once."

It was almost night; I promised to return on the morrow, and I went back to the Palais-Royal with the information I had derived. The Regent, to whom I imparted it, shrugged his shoulders in pity, and advised me to think no more of this gaoler's tale; but I insisted with such obstinacy that he should visit the Iron Mask's prison with me, that he consented, less from curiosity than because he lacked the firmness to refuse.

"All that I shall see," he said, "will teach me no more than I know."

On the following day, under the pretext of assisting at my interrogatories, he accompanied me to the Bastille; and, in spite of his *incognito*, the homage which greeted him would have turned him from the aim of his visit if I had not recalled it to him. M. de la Maison-Rouge relaxed his severe air, and sought to make us forget that he was lieutenant of the King at the Bastille; we thanked him for all his amiable expressions. The gaoler, proud and moved to be serving as guide to His Royal Highness, came near to breaking our necks as he showed us the wonders of the Bastille, from the *oubliettes* to the iron cage of the Cardinal La Balue. I shuddered at the thought of a Cardinal being imprisoned in a manner which might have been deserved, say, by a Lagrange-Chancel. The prison of the Iron Mask surprised me more; it is a large chamber, amply illuminated by a grated window; I noticed that it must have been tapestried before it was whitewashed anew. On entering, I did not receive the gloomy impression I was expecting; the Regent, on the contrary, stood motionless, and folded his arms. The gaoler remained outside, from respect.

"What the devil," I cried, with an outburst of laughter, "can the poor gentleman have done to suffer such cruel martyrdom?"

"Dubois," replied the Regent, with a coolness which I found contagious, "I swear to you that if the Duchesse d'Orléans took it into her head to have a lover, I would not repeat the story of the Iron Mask."

"In truth, Monseigneur, I am tempted to believe that you are well informed upon this episode of the preceding reign."

"I!—no; I am speaking on supposition, in idleness. How many years did he stay in the Bastille?"

"Only four; but more than thirty at Pignerol and the Iles Sainte-Marguerite."

"It is a singular punishment to be made to pass for dead in your lifetime."

Meanwhile, I examined the walls curiously. They bore no inscription; they had been scraped after the prisoner's death; but I thought I perceived, through the rust of the window bars, some interlaced letters, which I took to be an F and an M. I pointed them out to His Royal Highness, who shivered, and mocked at my fancy. I distinctly saw on the iron plate which filled up the back of the chimney, some characters engraved with the point of a knife. I dismissed the gaoler, whose eyes were fixed upon our every movement, and sought to decipher words which had been sufficiently erased to escape the inquisition of M. du Junca. The Regent made use of his sound eye, and, by dint of guessing, I recovered the following verses, which I recognised as forming part of the elegy *To the Nymphs of Vaux*. La Fontaine had composed this courageous elegy to plead the cause of his friend Fouquet, arrested and brought to trial at the moment of his greatest favour. I set them down just as they were:

"Pleurez, nymphes de Vaux,	Faites croître vos ondes; . . .
La cabale est contente,	Oronte est malheureux, . . .
Oronte est à présent	Un objet de clémence. . . .
Mais c'est être innocent	Que d'être malheureux. . . .
Si Louis sur vos bords,	Un jour porte ses pas; . . .
La plus belle victoire	Est de vaincre son cœur! . . .
Fléchissez ses arrêts,	Tâchez de l'adoucir. . . ."

* Weep, ye nymphs of Vaux, May your waves swell, . . . The cabal is content, Orontes is wretched, . . . Now is Orontes An object for clemency. . . . Yet to be innocent, Is but to be wretched. . . . If on your paths, Some day Louis passes. . . . The fairest victory Is to vanquish his heart! . . . Overcome his decrees, Seek ye to soften him. . . .

The singular arrangement of these unrhymed verses, and the initial letters of each hemistich, led me to seek for the sense of the enigma, and I composed a name with the capitals.

"FOUQUET!" I cried.

"Silence, Dubois," said His Highness, in a terrible voice. "If I were to obey the last wishes of Louis XIV, you would not be alive to-morrow."

"Monseigneur, chance alone is guilty. What! the Iron Mask was no other than Fouquet?"

"Let us be out of here; one cannot breathe in this room. I never think of Fouquet's destiny without a shudder."

"What was his crime, then, that it could not be punished in the light of day?"

"Fouquet loved the Queen."

The Regent, whom the recollection terrified, did not feel relieved until he had left the Bastille. He exhorted me to inviolate secrecy, and revealed to me the scene he had witnessed at the death-bed of Louis XIV. He had already betrayed the secret himself at a supper in the Luxembourg; Richelieu, Nocé, and many others know it; I am no longer responsible for it, and, like the barber of King Midas, I tell it to paper, which will be no more discreet than the water-lilies.

The affair of the conspiracy was still at the same point. The Duchesse d'Orléans and the dowager bastards served the Duc du Maine as advocates and spies. Leblanc and d'Argenson only seconded me timidly, and the last deserted me altogether for his nuns. I thundered, swore, declared to the Regent that he had better give up everything, open the doors of the Bastille, and cry: "Let everyone leave who likes!"

He repeated to me that his intention was not to make princes criminals of state; he was moved to pity over the lot of his enemies, and finished by begging me to torture the poor people no longer. The dispatches I received from the commissioners charged with the preliminary proceedings against the Duc and Duchesse du Maine were anything but satisfactory. I threw the cart after the horse. Here are the imbecilities that the King's people wrote me.

Amongst the mass of papers, notes, fragments of letters, and Spanish letters that had been seized from Madame du Maine, there was one from Alberoni in which that Catiline said to the

bastard: "As soon as war is declared in France, set fire to all your mines." The Duc du Maine could not deny that this letter had reached him; but he pretended that the phrase was used figuratively, and that it referred to the King's *corps de ballet*, whom he was to debauch for the King of Spain. And the commissioners drew up a report of this buffoonery! That was nothing; the Duc du Maine threw all the blame on his wife, who admitted it, adding: "M. d'Orléans believes that I hate him; if he would follow my advice, I should prove a better councillor than anyone." She had been advised that she would run no risk if she took the onus of everything on herself, and that her sex would save her even from imprisonment. The Duc played the innocent so insinuatingly, that one might have taken him to be one. "I am not anxious to return immediately," he said, when he was taken to Dourlens, "for my innocence cannot fail to be acknowledged; but I only speak of my own!" Madame du Maine, who found prison tedious, asked for a change of scene, as the air of Dijon was injurious to her health. The Regent, worn out by Madame d'Orléans' tears and supplications, would have had her set at liberty; but wiser counsels prevailed, and the little conspirator was transferred to the Château of Châlons-sur-Saône, which she found even more disagreeable than that of Dijon. She screamed to her enemies in the Bastille that she was going away to die of grief and disgust. Mademoiselle de Launay had nothing more urgent to do than to acquaint Madame la Princesse that her daughter begged for her blessing. With much difficulty, Madame la Princesse obtained permission to see this beloved daughter, who flew into a horrible passion because her mother did not bring her her release. Madame la Princesse even sought to interest the Pope in behalf of the little Duchesse; she flooded the Palais-Royal with imploring letters, which I answered at my discretion. At last, the Regent, exhausted by this lachrymose and despairing correspondence, took the pen from her fingers, by writing that he would gladly pardon Madame du Maine if she had only conspired against his life, but that he must perforce keep her in prison since she had been guilty towards the King's government. The Duc du Maine, deeming that he had only to ask, asked permission to go hunting; for all recreation, he was allowed to get astride a sorry hack, and

make the round of the citadel in the company of four men. But what vexed Madame du Maine more than all else was the tardy notice that was given her of the infidelities of her Cardinal; Master Polignac was no more satisfied by the Duc du Maine than the latter was satisfied by his red hat. He had only to stretch out his hand to find a wench of good-will, a maid of honour; meanwhile, Mademoiselle de Montauban became the rival of her patroness. Ah! if she had but been informed of it, the Cardinal would have lost his two eyes! For Madame du Maine is a female Orlando Furioso; at Dijon she used to have fits of madness, vapours, or epilepsy; she broke everything, screamed, rolled about the floor, and the company fled in terror; she would have beaten the Regent at the head of his army; then she would calm herself by playing cards, laugh and eat, until the next frenzy. As for the Duc du Maine, he gave himself the title of Prince of the horned race; and he wrote to Madame d'Orléans: "Prison is not where I ought to be put, but in a short jacket, with my backside to the birch, for having let myself be so led by the nose. My traitress can get herself made cardinal at her ease; I want never to see her again, even at a distance."

During these interminable delays, I caused to be arrested, tried, and condemned, a petty conspirator of the Bois de Boulogne, who had concluded a bargain with Alberoni to assassinate the Regent, or abduct him, living or dead, into Spain. It was one Lajonquière, a colonel dismissed the service for misconduct. He arrived in Paris with two hundred scoundrels disguised as merchants, of whom he was the chief. Lajonquière had such precise information that it seemed as though it had been furnished him by Nocé or myself. He fell right away into an ambuscade hard by La Muette, whither His Highness was repairing; he had chanced to lie there one night, but did not trouble to go there the next day. The assembly of men in the woods gave a clue to the plot; the musketeers tracked down all these worthy fellows like wolves; some were killed, others were taken, but Lajonquière escaped, and thought himself in surety in the Low Countries. There, as he was boastfully repeating that there would be news of a great stroke, that the Regent of France would die drunk and without confessing, Basnage informed me of it; and without

taking counsel of His Highness, I sent four French alguazils, pupils of d'Argenson, armed for this occasion with knives, in his pursuit. These brave fellows met my man in a street at Liège, and escorted him, with a pistol held to his head, to the frontier, all most politely and without the waste of a word.

"Gentlemen," cried the wretch, "you have kept my place in the Bastille? I see that I am lost, and shall be drawn and quartered."

"My friend," answered one of my supporters, "that is, probably, the first true word that has ever left your lips."

Lajonquière could not finish differently. I had augured ill enough of him when he wrote to the Regent: "Monseigneur, if, within a week, I do not receive a pension of fifteen hundred livres, I do not give you a month to live."

Otherwise, I saw that the conspiracy was not to cost a hair of the head to any one. All the women at Court had made magnanimity the fashion, to imitate the good Regent, who himself imitated Jesus Christ pardoning his executioners on the cross. When once Madame d'Orléans' tears were dried, I fully foresaw the issue of the affair. Mademoiselle de Valois was reconciled with Richelieu, and even with her rival de Charolais, to such an extent that she introduced herself with her into the Bastille. His Highness was still jealous of the attractive Duc, and kept him in prison, although he could not prevent his daughter from loving him. Richelieu—incredible as it may seem at the Bastille—obtained, if not his liberty, at least all that assists one to dispense with it. Mistresses!—they would have broken down the walls to reach him; he was given a complete household, a *valet-de-chambre*, two lackeys, a cook, musical instruments, furniture, anything he wished. It was a deplorable spectacle to see the Cellamare conspiracy turned to ridicule from the mere fact of a young fop adorning and scenting himself in a state prison as if for a ball, and of nights from the terrace ogling the girls and women of the upper and lower ranks, sending and receiving kisses and glances through the air. Did not people think fit to make excursion to the Rue Saint-Antoine and round the moats of the Bastille! "I have reversed the history of Danæ," said Richelieu on his liberation, "these devils of women have turned M. de la Maison Rouge into a lamb."

The Regent, who had crushed his foot, while returning one dark night from Asnières, where the Parabère had invited him to supper, was keeping to his room; he summoned me, and, according to my habit, I ran the risk of having my two feet crushed.

"My son," he said to me, as I entered, "there must be an end of this."

"Of what or of whom, Monseigneur?"

"Of conspirators, past, present, or to come. We have already attached too much importance to these little malcontents."

"Yes; but up to the present you have been looked upon as good-natured, you will now pass for an imbecile."

"You abuse my kindness in submitting to everything from you."

"To continue:—what expedient have you devised to wash all these vile reputations in less than no time, and without using *aqua-fortis*?"

"Bah! Memory does not last beyond a month in France. People will be astonished at first, then they will laugh, then all will be forgotten and set to the account of old sins."

"I must tell you once more that you are mistaken, the conspiracy did not only exist in our imaginations."

"No doubt."

"Then here is the whole *abominable conspiracy* plainly fallen to pieces."

"To save the appearances of justice, each of the accused must be induced to write an apologetic declaration of innocence."

"And Richelieu will say with Caesar: *Veni, vidi, vici!*"

"Not so; Richelieu is not included in my clemency; he will be exiled. This time it is not We who will it."

"Your *I will*, Monseigneur, is the wish of everyone. Let us exile Richelieu then until you recall him; it will be better than leaving him to prance about in his curls and embroidered coat on the terrace of the Bastille to attract all the women to his vicinity. Let the others be innocent; it is returning good for evil. At anyrate the Duc du Maine's imprisonment will have been a good thing, even if it has done no more than promote his soul's salvation. You know that all through Holy Week he fasted and abstained to such an extent that he was like to die of it. Here is a letter I have received telling me of his devoutness; he serves at Mass and communicates daily."

"That requires confirmation."

"I am too honest to give it you before I am made a bishop. If I become Pope, I will make you kiss my slipper as a penance."

"Try to become an honest man, that is even more difficult, and hurry on the prisoners' admissions."

I was disgusted at the trouble I had so uselessly given myself; however, I obeyed with zeal; it is one of the duties of a statesman, who should ever subordinate his opinion to his interest. I began by announcing the Regent's will to Madame du Maine, who answered in a vehement letter informing me that I should obtain all the necessary admissions and information from Mademoiselle de Launay. Perhaps she imagined that that young lady knew all her secrets; more likely she wished it to be understood that her husband had less cause for jealousy than he gave her. Mademoiselle de Launay was suffocated by this ingratitude, when I addressed her a few questions on the strength of Madame du Maine.

"The Duchesse has lost her wits in prison," she said, "as well as her friendship with me. Does she wish me to say that she is guilty? But I shall say nothing, not even that she is innocent."

I wrote again in different terms to Madame du Maine, and threatened her with perpetual imprisonment if she refused to submit to His Royal Highness's wishes; my letter evidently made her reflect, for thereupon she gave way.

Matters being thus, the conspiracy of Brittany, one of the branches of Cellamare's conspiracy, came to prove to the Regent that his clemency only tended to encourage the revolt.

"The devil take them!" he said to me; "I shall not meddle with it, and I will leave you, Dubois, to do as you please. Pardon or punish, it is your business; I have shown mercy to the first, but this time I will agree to anything, even to a sanguinary example. I repeat it to you: fill my part under these circumstances, and be as severe as I was merciful."

I plume myself on having acted as I ought for the repose of the Kingdom, with the approval of the Regent; I nominated commissioners under the presidency of M. de Châteauneuf, ex-ambassador to The Hague. This worthy man had already been created Councillor of State at my request, on condition that he would send his rogue of a nephew, the reverend Père Castagnère,

to the Mississippi. It is true that I was supreme judge of the four Breton gentlemen justly accused and condemned to death in the following year. I had to hold out against the solicitations of their families and their friends. I steeled my heart firmly; this has rendered me odious to fools and malcontents, who saw nothing more in this grave business than four heads cut off in the town of Nantes. What do I care if they have confounded my hand with that of the headsman! I could not, with any regard to justice, grant their lives to rebels who compassed the death of the Royal family.

At last, Madame du Maine sent me her written declaration, in which she confessed to having acted without her husband's knowledge, although in his name. By this devotion she prepared herself a sort of reconciliation. The letter was read in full Council; this sorely wounded the fair prisoner of Châlons. "You see," she cried, "they wanted to have my writing!" The Duc du Maine, whom the Regent informed of it for fear of a contradiction, declared that he held his wife responsible for her acts. The declarations of the others were all alike; it was Fontenelle who had drafted the model. They were examined by the Council, which looked upon them as proofs of the conspiracy; but full and complete pardon was granted by the Regent to all who had been in intelligence with Spain. Vincennes and the Bastille opened their doors to a host of people whom I had arrested as a measure of precaution.

"Now," said His Royal Highness, "it is you they will detest, and, if you are assassinated, I wash my hands of it."

"Say that to others, Monseigneur! They will not assassinate me until I meet them half-way."

However, since that time I gave up going abroad by night alone and on foot. La Fillon bears me a grudge for this; but so far I only fear assassination from this tenacious retention of urine.

The Duc du Maine, more angered than any fool in France, gave no thanks when informed that he was free. He retired to his lands at Clavigny, near Versailles, swearing, but somewhat tardily, that he would not be entrapped again. The brute had written to his wife that if she ever showed her face before him again, he would put her in such a condition that she would be no longer able to conspire against his life and that of the King of

France. He drove out all his servants, and his confessor was the only one he did not change. He would have changed his wife, if he had been able, with the Pope's dispensation.

Madame du Maine, tired at having had to play cards and suffer from the vapours for six months as her sole recreation, returned to Sceaux, as gentle as a cat whose nails have been cut. She began by forming a new household; and, when Mademoiselle de Launay came with an offer of her services, "Mademoiselle," said she, "go and seek employment from your friends."

Mademoiselle de Launay, however, would take no rebuff, bestirred herself so busily, that she has maintained her position at Sceaux, as witty and as frail as ever. Division could not long obtain between the Duc and the Duchesse. The latter mouthed despair and repentance for a few months, writing: *My beloved husband*, at one time; *Barbarous husband*, at another; the letters were returned to her, at first, with the seals unbroken; then they remained unanswered, then were answered with reproaches. Madame du Maine, who no longer showed herself either at balls or at the play, went one morning to the Duc d'Orléans to implore him to reconcile her with her cripple.

"Madame," said the Prince, "I shall not interfere, for I have learned from Sganarelle that it is unwise to put one's finger betwixt the bark and the tree."

Madame du Maine went on to caresses, which might have grown tender, if the Prince had not said to her, as he kissed her on both cheeks:

"Calm yourself, Madame; I make no objections; besides, it depends upon you more than upon him."

Madame, who entered upon this speech, burst out laughing.

"If the du Maines are reconciled," said she, "I shall repeat, like my late father, 'Agree amongst yourselves, Scum!'"

"Madame," said the little Duchesse, with a blush, "was your father at variance then with your mother?"

"In brief," resumed the Regent, "I do not care whether you be reconciled or not."

The Duc du Maine had been made to believe that His Highness dreaded nothing so much as to see him on good terms with his wife. He signed a treaty of peace, on condition that the Cardinal de Polignac should no longer make a third party in the establishment.

"There they are reconciled," said I, when I heard the news; "disagreeables will begin again, and will fall upon us like hail."

Indeed, during the night they had the audacity to affix a huge picture painted on canvas to the gate of the Palais-Royal, representing three gallows, above which a peacock hovered admiring his own tail. It was an allegory that I understood too well to expound; they might have thought me the author. The Regent was diverted at this picture, which he exhibited in his gallery, promising a reward to anyone who should discover its meaning. Everybody came to exploit his knowledge. Arouet was not the last to arrive. "Oh, oh!" said he, "it smells of *Oedipus*, a league off!" This phrase was all the more bold, in that Voltaire was accused of having written the tragedy of *Oedipus* against His Royal Highness, as though there was a great likeness between Jocasta and the Duchesse de Berri. Some sphynx of darkness affixed these Latin verses one night, *ad pictoris commentarium* :—

Hic fastus, Relosane, tuos junonius ales,
Sputiciasque tuas crux tibi trina notat.
Quâ regnas arte agnovit plebs atque senatus.
Haec tibi, princeps, crux debita prima fuit.
Contemptos credas divos, Relosane, secundâ
Dignus eris; merces tertia fit scelerum.*

"The Devil!" said the Regent, when these verses were shown him, "if Madame du Maine could write Latin elegiacs, I would give her the reward for explaining the picture."

"Monseigneur," I replied, "it is some college pedants who have achieved this allegorical masterpiece. They would only deserve one gallows, were that less high than Haman's."

"They are welcome to conspire in this manner and in Latin at their own sweet will; they will not make me angry."

I believe the picture was conceived and executed in the arsenal of Sceaux.

There was more than one man in that Château who merited hanging.

* D'Orléans, Juno's bird is your portrait; these three crosses are the signs of your abominations: the people and the parliament know by what arts you reign. The first cross is due to the sorcerer; despiser of Heaven, the second cross is due to your irreligion; the third is the recompense of all your crimes.

The lesson I had wished to give Alberoni had not been without its effect; the war declared against Spain was spent in marches and counter-marches. The French army, commanded by Berwick, obtained some successes, at which Philip V took fright. That Prince, who was, I know not why or how, beloved in France, had counted on the defection of our troops. He repented at having been goaded so far that he could not retreat without dishonour; hence his dissatisfaction with Alberoni, a dissatisfaction which grew until it led to the latter's disgrace. In the early days of January 1720, Alberoni received an order from the King to leave within twenty-four hours, and cross the frontier. Alberoni made no attempt to soften Philip, who was buying peace of the Regent so cheaply; he only took the time to pack his baggage, so great was his dread lest they should be as eager to keep him in Madrid as they had been to be rid of him. What he carried off in gold and silver was enough to impoverish Spain.

Alberoni, under the escort of a French officer, took refuge on French soil; to imprison him for the remainder of his days in the Bastille would have been a Machiavellian act of vengeance from which I was wise enough to refrain. It seemed to me a finer thing to enjoy his abasement as my workmanship. It was I who handed him a passport to enable him to proceed without anxiety from Gironde to Antibes, where he embarked. I had made a point of signing my name in big letters, and wrote to him that should he desire to come to Paris, I begged him to accept an apartment in the Palais-Royal, on the same floor as my own. He did not reply to my politenesses, but went on to Italy, where they distrusted such a dangerous guest. Genoa and Rome shut their gates to him; but the Pope had need of his talents, which showed to disadvantage on a less vast stage: it was a question of destroying the little republic of San Marino. However he may hope to live as peaceably as any petty citizen of the Maremma, for they begin to feel grateful to him for having preserved the Inquisition in Spain. I will say of him, as Madame said of the Maintenon: *Patet noster, libera nos de Alberoni! Amen.* To-day the dear Cardinal must be fifty-eight; I am gently completing my sixty-fifth year. The chances are against me, for I have seven more years than he and a retention of urine.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE REGENT'S ILL-HEALTH—PORTRAIT OF NOCÉ AND THE ROUÉS
—THE LUXEMBOURG—PHILIPPICS—AROUET DE VOLTAIRE—
HIS PORTRAIT AND CHARACTER—REPRESENTATION OF
OEDIPUS—THE ABBEY OF CHELLES—EXTRAVAGANCE OF
THE DUCHESSE DE BERRI—HER SECRET MARRIAGE WITH
RIOM—THE TOAD'S HEAD—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF
MADAME DE BERRI

I HAVE said that the Regent had greatly changed both inwardly and externally since his Regency, which was dissipated, not in pleasure but in fearful debauches; at this, while outwardly laughing, I secretly groaned, for I knew from my own experience the frailty of human things, and the lees which lie at the bottom of the cup of pleasure, not to speak of health, that blessing without which all other possessions are as nought. Is it not melancholy, for instance, for a Cardinal-minister to have a bladder like mine? I dare not eat or drink for fear of falling into the hands of the doctors and apothecaries. The Regent will not have a long life; he will be struck down and die of apoplexy; that is his destiny, in spite of the bleedings of Chirac and Maréchal. However, nothing will stop him; he is no sooner out of his bed than he is doing his best to be ordered back again. I could pardon him his taste or his madness for women, in view of his robust temperament; but his suppers, and, the consequence of them, his drunkenness, make him simply his own executioner. I had not countenanced him in this sorry failing, but his Berri and his *roués* educated him in their school; he never drinks less than five bottles a day, and at the ceremonies of the table in the Luxembourg, he calls for the "vessel of Charlemagne," as he dubs his glass, a sort of little barrel, girt round with silver, which he empties at a draught. All the women at these nocturnal festivals used to drink like men who drink hard. Wines of Cyprus and Tokay were followed by brandy and liqueurs, until the Regency was compelled to fall under the table. Before the Duchesse de Berri's death, His Royal Highness was incessantly drunk both at the Council and at Mass.

The Duc d'Orléans would go to Asnières to visit the Parabère, to the Luxembourg, to Saint-Cloud, or to Chelles, and return in his carriage quite incapable of walking. One night he got out of his carriage on the road from Saint-Cloud, and fell up to his neck into a ditch full of mud, and in this plight sent for his mistress, Émilie, to pull him out of the gulf, as he said. This degrading condition was repeated every day, and my wise counsels could not outweigh the seductions of Nocé, who served as Mentor to this new Telemachus. Nocé, whom, with Broglie, I have not included in my description of the *roués*,* is a well-mannered scoundrel; for long he deceived me, as he did many others; I believed in his friendship, which was no more than a share of his hatred. I thank Heaven that I unmasked the traitor and reduced him to a condition in which he could not hurt me. The unworthy fashion in which he worked against me during my Embassy in England broke all our relations. Nocé looks like some tall Arab or Egyptian; Madame said he was black, green, and swarthy yellow; the phrase is more amusing than just. He has crisp black hair, the glance of a chameleon, and a serpent's breath.

"Nocé," I said to him, "you breathe of what you are; it is gall and not honey which flows in your veins." He is at least fifty, and still grovels in the mire. It needed all my credit to upset that of Nocé, who had so blinded His Royal Highness that he believed the Parabère was faithful to him. He knew very well, however, what was this piece of virtue with ten lovers. Nocé has, indeed, a certain wit, but it has an impertinence which runs to spite. He is the son of a former sub-governor of the Duc d'Orléans; on this title he treats with his dear Philip on equal terms. He has no more respect for God than for men, as though there were no thunder; but all his vices are subordinated to ambition and the pleasure of doing harm. According to my system of judging people after their names, I realised that his came from the Latin *nocere*, which means *to harm*. Only Satan can have christened him so well. Finally, his chief merit consists in his having transferred from the Regent's pocket to his own two or three millions of good money, which he has not spent in founding convents.

Broglie is another rogue, less interested, less false, less criminal than Nocé, but with Italian blood in his veins; that is enough to

* Dubois only speaks of the *roués* in this place; the description to which he alludes is wanting in the manuscript.

show he is not worth much. His elder brother was killed in battle; his younger is a worthy officer, tedious to see or listen to, otherwise an honest man, neither grasping nor a liar; such is not the *roué* who will be put to the wheel one of these days. In face he resembles an owl, with his blazing eyes and his beaked nose; he excels in digging up epigrams; he finds expressions so burlesque and at the same time so ingenious that the laughter absolves him; he is always laden with debts, for the moment he has a few crowns, he goes and loses them in the hells. He greatly contributed to disgusting me with the Luxembourg.

I should not have the effrontery to set down in writing what used to pass there; I finished by excusing myself from being present on the ground of my work. "Dubois," the Regent would say, "will desert us to-night; we must leave his chair empty and his glass full; we shall remember to behave ourselves lest we incur his reproaches." It is true that I often played a passive part in these orgies; and without the kindness of a great lady for me, when the lights were extinguished, I should have been reduced to nothing. His Royal Highness himself was not as happy as he would have liked. "My friends," the Regent would repeat, with tears in his eyes, "I am an unfortunate man! I shall have to sacrifice Venus to Bacchus! I have come to the point which Jove reached when he carried off Ganymede to pour his wine for him."

The Duchesse de Berri, who presided at all these *fêtes* with unflagging gaiety, knew the art of consoling her father's *ennui*. Supper began at about ten o'clock, and the guests did not leave the table except in couples and in their turn; there were cries, songs, shouts of laughter. The women were usually less numerous than the men. I have got a scar as a relic of one of these Bacchanalia, caused by a crystal vase that Madame de Sabran threw at me because I had kissed her. On the summer nights we strolled about the gardens without any ceremony or etiquette; the mistress for the time being set the example, and the Regent was not slow to follow it. I remember once that we heard the Carthusians chanting the midnight Angelus in the distance; we joined our voices, but to a different theme. This sybarite manner of life was no longer suitable to my age. 'Tis true that Anacreon, whom Richelieu held up to me as a model, was older than me when he celebrated wine, love, and Bathyllus, but then he was not a Secretary of State. An old man has an

ungraceful position amidst the follies of youth. The Regent even carried his oblivion of his age so far that I said to him, quite vainly :

"Monseigneur, you are more than forty."

"Yes, my dear Dubois," he replied ; "but I have lived more than eighty."

"One would not judge so from your behaviour."

Above all, I could not forgive him for giving cause for fearful suspicions ; it was all very well not to believe them ; but one shuddered to hear them.

Of all his children, His Highness preferred his three daughters, the Duchesse de Berri, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, and Mademoiselle de Valois ; I can understand his not caring for his great ninny of a Duc de Chartres. They ought to make him a grand master of the orders of Mount Carmel and Saint-Lazare, nothing could be better ; I shall be much deceived if he does not take the vows some day. The Regent then conceived an affection for his daughters, who had a prodigious fondness for their father, which gave rise to gossip ; but people grew accustomed to it, and the custom grew until they sang in the streets, the antechambers, and all over the place, the scurvy song which begins thus :

"Philippe est un joli mignon, etc."

These infamies came from the workshop of Madame du Maine : verse and prose, songs and epigrams rained down to swell these calumnies, and His Royal Highness was not the last person to repeat them. "What would you have me do?" he would say ; "if the people were not to sing, it would weep." The good Prince would not believe that his intimates could be the authors of these insulting satires.

Amongst the most mordant and the most unpunished, I will mention the *Philippics* and the tragedy of *Oedipus*. The two poets who wrote them deserved the gallows. One was put in prison, from which he escaped ; the other was loaded with presents. Everybody knows La Grange-Chancel and Voltaire. La Grange, whom I have frequented in company with Racine, Santeul, and Chaulieu, is a sheep with a hyena's head ; otherwise he is a good man at heart and a *bon vivant*. He has a gnome's figure, opaque, heavy, and rolling in fat. One would not believe there could be so much gall underneath this inert mass, that stupid physiognomy, and these smooth locks. One is astonished

to hear a harsh and strident voice proceed from this weighty envelope. He is for ever repeating that he is good and his enemies wicked. He wrote tragedies at College, and those he composes to-day are the work of a schoolboy. He calls himself complacently the pupil of Racine, whose advice to him is to go and make shoes rather than comedies. The Abbé Grécourt, the Princesse de Conti, whose page he was, Madame du Maine, who had been free with her favours to him, made him what he is, an impudent rhymester, a furious libeller. He was under obligations to the Regent, who pensioned him, and assisted him on more than one occasion ; but a law-suit having sprung up between himself and the Duc de La Force, on the subject of some estates in Périgord, he was anxious that his side should be held the better, because M. de La Force had been a Protestant, then an abbé, then a duke, then a huckster, then a thief, said he, in a voice of Themis. He applied for prompt justice to the Duc d'Orléans, who could do nothing, but let the tribunal condemn La Grange in the costs and expenses : *facit indignatio versus*. La Grange attributed his mishap to His Royal Highness, and from that time forth started to deafen him with verses which were pitiable, and, what is more, infamous. He gave voice loudly to the most atrocious charges against the Prince, who paid no heed to them. Impunity irritated La Grange. When asked why he attacked one so much greater than himself : "Why," he replied, "has the Regent taken La Force's part against me?" La Grange was a mad wolf, whom I tamed by a few caresses and some dinners. I summoned him, and begged him not to force His Highness to shut his mouth by the aid of authority. "M. Dubois," he replied, "I am not afraid of the Regent nor of any of his sycophants." My counsels were dissipated in smoke. The visits he paid me in this matter, without any conversion on his part, excited malicious tongues to attribute me a share in the *Philippics*. It was rumoured at Court that I furnished the facts which La Grange put into his odes.

"Well, well, Abbé," asked the Prince, "I hear of horrors being written at your dictation against my daughters and ministers."

"Monseigneur," I replied, "if my hand had committed the crime of betraying your Highness, I would cut it off."

"Believe me, cut nothing off unless it be the ears of your calumniators ; but beg La Grange to spare the ladies."

The first of the *Philippics* were completed when the Cellamare conspiracy was discovered. La Grange was so intimately ensconced at Sceaux that I was tempted to lodge him in the Bastille; but my dread of the arm of Juvenal restrained me. La Grange, with incredible boldness, avowed himself to be the author of the *Philippics*, which were circulating everywhere, both in manuscript and in an edition printed at Amsterdam by the help of the rascally Rousseau. They were even attentive enough to send to the Palais-Royal a more dreadful copy than the others with notes envenomed by the vilest perfidy. Saint Simon had originally shown the Regent the two first odes, in which he was openly accused of having poisoned the Princes and of seeking to usurp the throne. The Regent tore them up, saying, "This is the work of a madman or a monster; I do not wish to take any notice of these libels, else I should have him condemned to death." It was I who brought him the third ode, which announced a continuation of this attack of the Furies. I did not wish to ruin La Grange, but to save the Regent from a poetical conspiracy. The Regent fell into a terrible passion when he found his beloved daughter, De Berri, involved in these atrocities. "Nocé," he cried, on the spur of the moment, "take fifteen musketeers and go in pursuit of this wretch, La Grange; kill him like a dog, there will be less left for the executioner."

Nocé would have gone, but I stopped him, pointing out to His Royal Highness that he would be furnishing arms against himself, and that such a revenge was neither just nor necessary. He yielded to my advice, and was grateful for it; I sent a warning to La Grange, and, when I thought him in safety, sent people in pursuit of him. The infernal Nocé had already circulated a rumour that the Prince wished to get rid of this disseminator of libels. The scandal was soon enhanced by such an indiscreet report; they went so far as to say that La Grange had been assassinated; his sudden disappearance made the false statement plausible. La Grange heard of it, and wished to look closely at the figure he would cut after his death; he returned to France, and was taken at Avignon by an agent of d'Argenson, who was more furious, although he had been less attacked than the Regent. The Princesse de Conti succeeded in obtaining the favour that La Grange should be sent, without a formal trial, to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite; soon afterwards, she effected the facilitation

of the escape of her former page, who wanders through Switzerland, Italy, and Holland, continuing his *Philippics* and polluting all men's ears with them. Since he was in the habit of naming the Regent Busiris or Proustes, might it not have been as well to treat him after the pattern of those tyrants of antiquity. Undoubtedly, such a poet is more dangerous than a score of Cartouches.

The tragedy of *Oedipus*, which was represented with so much noise, and approved by His Royal Highness, has always seemed to me to be directed against the habits of the Palais-Royal and the Luxembourg. I have said it, but they would not believe me; the public, however, was as clear-sighted as I; whence a host of sarcasms pushed to the point of exaggeration. Arouet, moreover, was not in his satirical apprenticeship; ever since he left school he had been hurling his epigrams broadcast; he had composed the famous lines of the *Moabites* and the *Ammonites*. He had attributed to his brother in Apollo, Lebrun, whom he hated, the *J'ai Vu*, to which he might have added—*la Bastille! I have seen the Bastille!* I was the cause of the imprisonment which so rankles with him; he ought by rights to thank me for having lodged and boarded him at the King's expense; it afforded him leisure in which to write satire. There is much talk of his poem *La Ligue*, which, although professing to pass in the reign of Henri IV, is none the less an allegory of the present time, with the conspiracy of Cellamare and the du Maines. As for *Oedipus*, it is useless for him to deny its hostile intentions, I shall always find them in it. If the Duc d'Orléans had been led by my counsels, the incestuous *Oedipus* would have won for its author no gold medal with the effigy of Philip of Orléans, but a few years of penitence and seclusion. But no, this knave d'Arouet scratches with one hand while he caresses with the other; he flatters and maligns; he partakes of the nature of the cat, falsest of all the domestic animals. In Thibet, I wager, he would adore the grand Llama's excrement; in Paris he makes a jest of it. He is without heart or soul; but he possesses wit; he has but that, but he has it in the very soles of his feet: it is the devil's wit, if you like. They pretend that I resemble him; I do not take it as a compliment. In any case, he has little love for me, in spite of the incense he burns under my nose; were disgrace to come to me, he would pelt me with mud. He has not forgotten me in the *J'ai Vu*:

"I have seen men of nothing holding the highest rank."

II. L

In the letters which he writes to me, he compares me only with the Sullys and Colberts, and in his rhymed epistles he sets the Cardinal de Richelieu far below me; I laugh in my sleeve and keep my countenance.

Voltaire is a long diaphanous body, yet he does not let you easily read the bottom of his thought. His lean, pale, and bony face is marked by a look of mockery, all the more perfidious in that it finds expression in fair words. He has a perpetual epigram on his pinched lips, whether he is speaking to a prince or to a lackey. He would show no more respect for God; he even affects to treat religion with a sovereign contempt. "Take care," I have said to him, "you are attacking a mighty power—the priests and the devout fair!" For my part, I do not plume myself on my piety, but intolerance of religion is my bugbear. Voltaire brings intolerance to his philosophy. Everything turns to poison beneath his pen; he extracts venom from the Bible, which he is fond of quoting. His modesty is but a transparent veil cast over by the exalted notion he has of himself; in that he gives a proof of taste. Madame de Villars is right in saying that he is like a touchstone which communicates its properties to the iron with which it comes in contact; indeed, I have seen fools lose their folly while communing with him. There is the where-withal to make a reputation in the scraps of wit he drops without thinking. I have marked him as the most dangerous man in France, and events will show what he can do with his pen, which he has dubbed the arm of ridicule. He detests kings, but has made himself their courtier; he detests nobles, and he seeks nobility, styling himself pompously M. Arouet de Voltaire; he is envious of honour and fortune, and goes about preaching the mediocrity and obscurity of the poet. He would fain play the part of Enceladus against Heaven, and he flatters more than one Cardinal.

"Monsieur," I said to him, "would you, who wrote *Oedipus*, be able to explain the enigma of your own character?"

"Monseigneur," he replied, "I am not too sure of what I am, but I know what I should like to be."

Finally, Arouet, on whom the Regent has showered favours, is the anonymous author of almost all the epigrams which assail us. The most horrible part of it is that he never fails to bring them to me with great sighs of indignation. He will end by being

cloistered in the Bastille to do penance. Crébillon informed me as a certainty that the verses which circulated upon *Oedipus* issued from the same workshop:

"La grosse Valois, etc."

Arouet wrote both the question and the answer:

"C'est beaucoup d'honneur à Philippe,
Que de lui comparer Oedipe.
L'un ignorait ce qu'il faisait,
Mais l'autre sait bien ce qu'il fait."*

His Royal Highness does not know of the hatred which is excited against him by spiteful verses. Woe to the government which lets itself be taken in the breach by ridicule or contempt. Arouet, with his *Oedipus*, did us more hurt than Cellamare's conspiracy.

He had composed this tragedy at the age of nineteen. His detention in the Bastille, which I should have preferred to my retention of urine, gave him leisure to put the final touches to his work. It was no small task to have to rival the *Oedipus* of the great Corneille; that of Sophocles is only of interest to colleges. As soon as he was free of the bolts he approached the Comédie-Française, to induce them to produce *Oedipus*. "Its success," said he to the actors, "will be manifest to everybody; for the Regent is at the Palais-Royal." The actors did their utmost to dissuade him from giving this tragedy at the theatre, and, in order to disgust him, exacted numerous changes and an *honest* love interest, to use Dufresne's expression. Arouet thrust *Philoctetes* aside for his incestuous *Oedipus*, and solicited permission to play the piece. Père La Rue, who knew him, exhorted me secretly to prohibit it. But Arouet, relying on all his friends and patrons, anticipated me with His Royal Highness. I was present, as was Madame d'Orléans, among the audience, which he knew how to turn to his advantage.

He arrived, presented by the Marquis de Breteuil, and dismayed us by his genuflexions. He was wearing a fine court suit, and I stopped him in the middle of his first sentence to ask him where he had bought it.

"Monseigneur," he said, "I have conspired against mythology,

* 'Tis doing great honour to Philip, to compare him with *Oedipus*. The one knew not what he was doing, but the other is well aware of what he does.

In the letters which he writes to me, he compares me only with the Sullys and Colberts, and in his rhymed epistles he sets the Cardinal de Richelieu far below me; I laugh in my sleeve and keep my countenance.

Voltaire is a long diaphanous body, yet he does not let you easily read the bottom of his thought. His lean, pale, and bony face is marked by a look of mockery, all the more perfidious in that it finds expression in fair words. He has a perpetual epigram on his pinched lips, whether he is speaking to a prince or to a lackey. He would show no more respect for God; he even affects to treat religion with a sovereign contempt. "Take care," I have said to him, "you are attacking a mighty power—the priests and the devout fair!" For my part, I do not plume myself on my piety, but intolerance of religion is my bugbear. Voltaire brings intolerance to his philosophy. Everything turns to poison beneath his pen; he extracts venom from the Bible, which he is fond of quoting. His modesty is but a transparent veil cast over by the exalted notion he has of himself; in that he gives a proof of taste. Madame de Villars is right in saying that he is like a touchstone which communicates its properties to the iron with which it comes in contact; indeed, I have seen fools lose their folly while communing with him. There is the where-withal to make a reputation in the scraps of wit he drops without thinking. I have marked him as the most dangerous man in France, and events will show what he can do with his pen, which he has dubbed the arm of ridicule. He detests kings, but has made himself their courtier; he detests nobles, and he seeks nobility, styling himself pompously M. Arouet de Voltaire; he is envious of honour and fortune, and goes about preaching the mediocrity and obscurity of the poet. He would fain play the part of Enceladus against Heaven, and he flatters more than one Cardinal.

"Monsieur," I said to him, "would you, who wrote *Oedipus*, be able to explain the enigma of your own character?"

"Monseigneur," he replied, "I am not too sure of what I am, but I know what I should like to be."

Finally, Arouet, on whom the Regent has showered favours, is the anonymous author of almost all the epigrams which assail us. The most horrible part of it is that he never fails to bring them to me with great sighs of indignation. He will end by being

cloistered in the Bastille to do penance. Crébillon informed me as a certainty that the verses which circulated upon *Oedipus* issued from the same workshop:

"La grosse Valois, etc."

Arouet wrote both the question and the answer:

"C'est beaucoup d'honneur à Philippe,
Que de lui comparer Oedipe.
L'un ignorait ce qu'il faisait,
Mais l'autre sait bien ce qu'il fait,"*

His Royal Highness does not know of the hatred which is excited against him by spiteful verses. Woe to the government which lets itself be taken in the breach by ridicule or contempt. Arouet, with his *Oedipus*, did us more hurt than Cellamare's conspiracy.

He had composed this tragedy at the age of nineteen. His detention in the Bastille, which I should have preferred to my retention of urine, gave him leisure to put the final touches to his work. It was no small task to have to rival the *Oedipus* of the great Corneille; that of Sophocles is only of interest to colleges. As soon as he was free of the bolts he approached the Comédie-Française, to induce them to produce *Oedipus*. "Its success," said he to the actors, "will be manifest to everybody; for the Regent is at the Palais-Royal." The actors did their utmost to dissuade him from giving this tragedy at the theatre, and, in order to disgust him, exacted numerous changes and an *honest* love interest, to use Dufresne's expression. Arouet thrust *Philoctetes* aside for his incestuous *Oedipus*, and solicited permission to play the piece. Père La Rue, who knew him, exhorted me secretly to prohibit it. But Arouet, relying on all his friends and patrons, anticipated me with His Royal Highness. I was present, as was Madame d'Orléans, among the audience, which he knew how to turn to his advantage.

He arrived, presented by the Marquis de Breteuil, and dismayed us by his genuflexions. He was wearing a fine court suit, and I stopped him in the middle of his first sentence to ask him where he had bought it.

"Monseigneur," he said, "I have conspired against mythology,

* 'Tis doing great honour to Philip, to compare him with *Oedipus*. The one knew not what he was doing, but the other is well aware of what he does.

which represents Apollo as half nude, and against Boileau, who shows us him all mud-bedraggled, in the person of Colletet."

"Monsieur," I retorted, "so long as you only conspire thus, you may live without dread of the Bastille."

"I only dread displeasing His Royal Highness," he retorted.

"In that case, you have nothing to fear," said the Duc d'Orléans kindly, "I hear marvels of your *Oedipus*."

"Ah! Monseigneur," he replied, "I should like you to judge it for yourself."

"It is a disagreeable subject, that of Oedipus!" interrupted Madame d'Orléans.

"I only chose it, however, in order to please you," said the little Arouet, biting his lips.

"Yes," I went on; "but is it not the law of Aristotle to finish with the punishment of crime?"

"My Oedipus puts out his eyes, as you know," said Arouet.

"It is a fearful punishment to be made blind," added the Regent, touching his bad eye.

"May I hope," asked the poet, "that you will become so to the faults of my play?"

"So be it, Monsieur des *J'ai Vu*."

"Monseigneur, I swear to you that I had no share in that platitude; but I rejoice to be able to add to it that *I have seen Oedipus* produced under the auspices of your Highness."

"Voltaire," said M. de Breteuil, "tell us something about your masterpiece."

"In four words, you have the piece," said the insolent fellow; "Jocasta is a very worthy Queen, who has married her son in ignorance, at least so history says; Oedipus has, moreover, slain his father Laius, also in ignorance: so true is it, that fatality enters greatly into the ill that is done and not into the good!"

"Yes," replied Breteuil, "has not Jocasta an affair of the heart with a certain Philocletes? It is very diverting."

"And holds up a good example," said Madame d'Orléans.

"Oh, *Mon Dieu!*" cried Arouet, "who would think of marrying his mother nowadays? Grave antiquity is full of such complications."

"Would you not be wise to change the name of Oedipus?" I suggested.

"For what reason?" objected the poet, with a look bristling with malice; "is it not his real name?"

"To be sure," said the Regent, "Corneille has certainly written a tragedy with that title."

"No doubt," pointed out Arouet; "but it is asserted that he would not have done so under the Regency. As a last favour, Monseigneur, I beg you to be present at the first performance."

"With Madame d'Orléans and my family," promised the good-hearted Regent. Arouet left, quite radiant from the arrows of satire he had shot on every side. When he had left, and also Breteuil and the Duchesse:

"By Heaven, Monseigneur," I cried, "do you not see that this scullion is laughing at you?"

"Is it his fault if he has the face and grimace of a monkey?"

"What! you did not understand that Oedipus was Philippe d'Orléans?"

"Tut! Then Jocasta is Madame d'Orléans, or Madame; and you must be Philocletes, the friend of Hercules, and the terror of monsters."

"I should be surprised if Arouet were not afraid of me. As for the friend of Hercules, I am yours, and that is enough for me."

"I am curious to see whether the pit will recognise me."

The performance took place. I suspect Arouet of having arranged the prodigious scandal. The Duc d'Orléans was in a box, with Madame, Madame d'Orléans, the Duchesse de Berri, Mademoiselle d'Orléans and Mademoiselle de Valois. All the mistresses and *roués* lined the house, and the pit was full of caballers. Already, for the name of *Oedipus*, on the placards, that of *Philippe* had been substituted in pencil; the latter forced himself to show no sign of his displeasure; but, before the curtain was raised, the spectators gazed at his box with murmurs and insulting laughter. The Regent feigned not to notice it, and continued to talk in a low voice with his daughter de Berri. When Dufresne appeared in the part of Oedipus, it was noticed, amid stupefaction, that he had made up to resemble the Regent himself. To complete the likeness, his perruque was an exact facsimile of his own. His Royal Highness could not refrain from laughing, his daughters imitated him; I cannot describe the applause which burst out whenever Oedipus spoke of his crimes, his incest, or the misery of his subjects:—

"Quand il se voit enfin, par un mélange affreux,
Inceste et parricide, et pourtant vertueux."*

All eyes, fixed upon the Regent and his family, directed these lines at him, and, to hide his embarrassment, he conceived the idea of applauding; his example was followed by everyone, and owing to this resolution, the success of which was not certain, he foiled the malevolence which had promised to strike him terribly in the public esteem. It is true, however, that at the moment when the high-priest said:

"Malheureux, savez-vous quel sang vous donna l'être?
Entouré de forfaits a vous seul réservés,
Savez-vous seulement avec qui vous vivez?"†

a voice was heard, interrupting the actor: "A pretty question! Who should know it better than he?" The actor went on:

"O Corinthe! O Phocide! Exécrable hyménée!
Se vois naître une race infâme, infortunée,
Digne de sa naissance et de qui la fureur
Remplira l'univers d'épouvante et horreur."

"The Devil!" interrupted the same voice, "pray, how many children are they to have?"

Madame de Berri changed colour, and was on the point of swooning. This singular impression did not escape the audience, which watched the spectacle in the box of His Royal Highness.

The performance was disturbed by a very burlesque incident. The daughter whom the Desmares had had by the Duc d'Orléans was in an open box, with her natural brother, the Chevalier d'Orléans. This fair damsel had only recently left the convent of Saint-Denis, where she had been brought up in ignorance of her parentage. Desmares had not seen her since her birth, because the nuns had declared that an actress would destroy, by her presence, the fruit of an education beneath the shadow of the altar. Desmares, who had fits of maternal feeling, could not forgive this rigour on the Regent's part. He had already, acting upon my advice, refused to be held responsible for another child, under the pretext that he was too much of a harlequin.

* When he beholds himself, through a dire conjunction, incestuous and a parricide, and virtuous withal.

† Wretch, do you know what blood 'twas gave you being?
You on whom pains await, due to you only—
Do you not even know with whom you live?

"What do you mean by that?" asked Desmares.

"I mean," answered His Highness, "that he is of too many different pieces."

The Elector of Bavaria was more accommodating, and accepted the *harlequin*, rewarding the mother with a snuff-box set with splendid diamonds. Mademoiselle Desmares, on leaving the convent, was installed at the Palais-Royal, under the paternal guardianship; she shed many tears that she was not legitimatised like her brother, the Chevalier d'Orléans, who loaded her with kindness up to the time of her marriage with the Marquis de Ségur. They took her to the theatre that she might be completely emancipated. Jocasta, who was more occupied with what was passing in the audience than with the stage, noticed an angelic face which blushed at the amours of Oedipus. She felt something, she knew not what, which distracted her from her part. Arouet was the first to perceive his queen's trouble, and he said in her ear:

"En ce moment vous oubliez Oedipe,
Reine des cœurs, pour penser à Philippe."*

"Little Sphinx," she answered, "you have guessed."

"My princess, are you thinking of him?"

"Of course; go and find out who is that pretty prude in a box with the Chevalier d'Orléans."

Arouet, in obedience to this imperious queen, ran after Fontenelle. "It is the maternal instinct speaking," said the latter; "that young person is her daughter." Arouet waited for the death of Jocasta before he told the Desmares of what he knew.

"Well, Arouet," she said, whilst the bravos resounded around her, "are you pleased? Why do you not kiss me?"

"I do," replied Voltaire, suiting the action to his words; "but are you not going to kiss your daughter, who applauded in so filial a fashion?"

"My daughter!"

Without removing her crown or the costume of her part, she came all breathless to the box, where her daughter sat, thinking no more of her than if she had never existed.

"Why! here is Desmares!" said the Chevalier d'Orléans.

"Jocasta!" said the little nun.

* Queen of hearts, you have forgotten Oedipus to think of Philippe.

"It is my daughter!" cried the actress, pressing her to her bosom, to her great astonishment. "Yes, it is my child," she repeated with tears.

But the poor child wept too to find herself the daughter of an actress. The Duc d'Orléans was so displeased at this scandal that he sent Desmares to sleep at Fort l'Evêque. Arouet obtained her release the following day. He had the effrontery to dedicate his tragedy to Madame d'Orléans, which action brought the tumult to its height. Madame de Berri, from bravado I think, was present five times in succession, with all her ladies, at *Oedipus*. "*Lassata, non satiata recessit*," said Juvenal-Arouet, with a proud air.

I should not venture to decide the precise degree to which the mute comparison of Oedipus and Philippe d'Orléans was carried. I deny with conviction the guilty relations that have been attributed to him with his three daughters; I have said that the Regent was a good father, and that was all.

His second daughter, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, was worthy to inspire love in anyone other than a father, but if several of the bolder court lords ventured to love her, not one of them attained her honour, or her dishonour, as you like to put it. She was admirably proportioned before her sojourn at the Abbey, where she put on over-much flesh; at the period when she was the ornament of the Palais-Royal, she had adopted a robe of some transparent tissue, designed in such fashion as to reveal all the lines of that fair body; her coquetry stopped at that. Her pink and white skin, ivory teeth, azure eyes, and locks of a golden blonde, each of these attractions went to make up a perfect beauty. Her small feet and delicate hands sufficed to fire the coldest with passion. Education had but half formed her. To sing ravishingly, to excel in woman's work, to paint like her father was nothing to her; her happiness was to give herself up to the tastes and pursuits of boys; perhaps, by dint of skipping, the same thing happened to her as to Marie Germain, who suddenly turned into a man. She preferred dogs, horses, and the chase to more peaceful pastimes. The Regent would not have her fancies thwarted, and laughed to hear her say she would become a nun. She had a martial boldness which I had reason to dread. One day, whilst passing through the garden of Saint-Cloud, my hat on my head, she ran across me with a pistol in her hand.

"Abbé, don't move," she said; "I want to see if I can rival William Tell's apple."

"Mademoiselle," I answered, in much alarm, "choose any other mark than my hat."

"No, Abbé, you are in the right position; do not be alarmed, I have more skill than you think."

"Help! Mercy, Mademoiselle d'Orléans."

The shot was fired, and her peals of laughter hardly reassured me. Fortunately, the pistol was only charged with powder.

"What, Abbé," said the Prince, to whom I related this pretty performance, "you are afraid of a nun."

"Great God! what a nun!"

It is true the duel of Mesdames de Nesle and de Polignac, in honour of Richelieu, had not yet come to testify to the courage of women. Mademoiselle d'Orléans, who played the prude, nevertheless grew amorous of an actor. It is the only *real* love I have known her to have; she was not yet Abbess of Chelles.

Mademoiselle d'Orléans had a pronounced taste for the Opera, that sanctuary of all the goddesses of mythology; this taste seemed hardly congruous with that for the convent life. The Opera, however, is but a convent of a particular kind, in which novices are not admitted. Mademoiselle d'Orléans was often there in a box with her mother; she especially admired the dancing-girls, who are, as a rule, made to perfection, and all over graces. I knew not why she would come and go away sighing. Madame asked her the reason of this unseasonable melancholy.

"Ah," she said, "I am thinking of all the souls Satan steals from God!" Admirable Christian charity! For some time, I had noticed that Mademoiselle d'Orléans had become less interested in the salvation of the souls of the dancing-girls, than in Cauchereau, who makes a mighty agreeable singer; that is all I know of his talents. Moreover, he has a woman's beauty and grace; a white complexion, with very delicate feet and hands. I know not who it was who called him, with no spiteful intention, Mademoiselle Cauchereau. Whenever he sang, Mademoiselle d'Orléans never failed to be present, and rolled lack-lustre eyes, which gave me an itch to laugh. One evening, when Madame d'Orléans was alone in her box with her daughter, I entered in search of His Highness, who was investigating behind the scenes. I approached Madame d'Orléans, who received me, as always,

with a polite and indifferent coldness. Mademoiselle d'Orléans had her eyes fixed on Master Cauchereau, who seemed to me to have an understanding with her. The air he was warbling had an Italian character, mighty tender. Mademoiselle d'Orléans revelled in the hearing of him, and when he had finished with a brilliant arpeggio, she cried loudly, "Ah! my dear Cauchereau!" This gallant exclamation was uttered in so amorous a tone, that the audience laughed before realising whence it came; but when her blushes betrayed Mademoiselle d'Orléans, the gaiety redoubled and there was a clapping of hands; Cauchereau trembled with anger; Madame d'Orléans was irritated and aghast; Mademoiselle d'Orléans was like to faint; I, an impassive witness of this odd scene, had as much as I could do to keep a serious face at that "*dear Cauchereau*."

"Mademoiselle," said the mother at last, "you shall go into a convent until I pardon you."

"With pleasure, Madame," replied the daughter, raising her head with a martial air.

I should not have believed the Regent would have had so little philosophy as to be angry with the *dear Cauchereau*; he wished to send him to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite; but Madame d'Orléans pressed her husband to make her daughter a nun; Madame de Berri advised it in her sister's interest; finally, after much discussion, the Duc d'Orléans resigned himself not to thwart this vocation, inexplicable, whatever one may say. He had several conferences with Mademoiselle d'Orléans, after which his eyes were moist with tears. Certainly, it costs something to a good father to separate himself from his daughter and bury her in a convent. He even refrained from speaking to me of it for fear of re-opening his wounds; he only said to me: "Happily the Abbey of Chelles is not far away." Madame had not been informed of this sudden resolution; it was feared she would oppose it, so great was her horror of nuns. They pretended that it was Mademoiselle d'Orléans' own wish to enter a cloister: at heart, she asked nothing better.

Two days after the adventure of the Opera, Mademoiselle d'Orléans returned from an excursion she had made on horseback to the Abbey of Chelles, with her sister De Berri. Madame and Madame d'Orléans were in company, quarrelling as usual. Mademoiselle d'Orléans entered fresh and smiling, and, as though it had been a comedy, flung herself at Madame's knees, saying:

"Will you allow me, Madame, to go to Chelles to perform my devotions?"

"And why to Chelles, if you please?" replied Madame, in dry tones; "can you not perform your devotions anywhere just as well as there? It is only important to do them well."

"No, Madame," replied Mademoiselle d'Orléans; "Chelles offers me a retreat which enchants me; these ladies of the Order of St. Benedict are angels."

"I warn you," said Madame d'Orléans, "that you need not count on becoming Abbess for a long time to come; Madame de Villars has the abbey, and I do not want to deprive her of it, for the Maréchal is one of my good friends."

"Bah!" replied Madame, "does the Maréchal Corneficius deserve more consideration than the Regent of France? Indeed, I am delighted that my grand-daughter should replace this Abbess de Villars."

"Decide whether Mademoiselle de Chartres is to go to the Convent," retorted Madame d'Orléans; "we are not talking now of Madame de Villars."

"You are her mother; it is your affair."

"One should not prevent her from performing her devotions."

"Nor from becoming Abbess."

On the following day she set off in a carriage, which she sent back with a letter for her father. No one saw this letter, but I know that she said in it that she did not wish to leave the convent again. I repeat, this fantasy is difficult of explanation.

She had no sooner left Paris than the Regent committed follies to regain his daughter; it was all in vain; he took neither food nor sleep. He sent the Cardinal de Noailles to Chelles to bring back his religious daughter, who was already known as Sister Sainte-Bathilde; the Cardinal came back to Paris alone. The Regent reluctantly submitted, but he visited Mademoiselle d'Orléans daily. She was more charming than ever in her novice's robes; Madame de Berri also went to see her. I know not what pleasure a nun can take in renouncing the world, but Mademoiselle de Chartres had never been so satisfied with her lot and her companions. The Duchesse de Berri died; the attempts to get her out were redoubled; she clung more and more to her condition; at last she took the veil irrevocably, pronounced her vows which were, at anyrate, not heard by Madame or her

father. It was a melancholy ceremony, in spite of the brilliancy lent to it by Mademoiselle d'Orléans; those who were present remarked on the beauty of the nuns.

"These marble statues," said Nocé, "paid no attention to the men!" What is the use of seeking regret! Moreover, these little saints had everything they required.

During the sacrifice of Mademoiselle d'Orléans, the Prince was closeted with his remaining daughter, Mademoiselle de Valois. He continued his visits to Chelles, whither he never failed to repair once a week to pass the day. Madame de Villars, greatly to the annoyance of Madame d'Orléans, gave up her place to Mademoiselle de Chartres; she made so much noise that a pension of twelve thousand livres was given her until some abbey should fall vacant. I only went once with His Highness to take the air which is breathed by the doves of Chelles; I do not know who had given me so scurvy a reputation, but I saw nothing but flying figures and lowered veils. It is true that, at that time, I had not my Cardinal's hat. When at last Madame died, she had these words on her lips: "I should much like to know what it is that Sainte-Bathilde finds so attractive." Richelieu, who can only be believed at times, has boasted of an expedition to Chelles in the disguise of a young abbé; but, as he has said in my presence that he performed this feat in the costume of a novice, I have let him give himself the lie.

Madame de Berri died miserably enough; she did penance in this world, for it is better to be a milkmaid with good health than a Princess of the Blood given up by the doctors. That recalls me to my own case, a Cardinal with such a sorry bladder. I have cause to be afraid of death; I have everything to lose, and nothing to gain. Madame de Berri, however, had certain noble qualities, devotion in despite of her errors, generosity and greatness of soul. I see no great harm in hearkening to the greatest possible number of lovers, as long as one can stand them; but to be oneself one's own executioner is madness. I often forewarned the Duc d'Orléans, who was not to be shaken in his fatalistic attitude.

"Monseigneur," I said, "Madame de Berri will kill herself as surely as with a pistol shot; there is nothing she denies herself."

"That is because her birth and rank allow her everything."

"I am not the son of an apothecary for nothing; if your

daughter continues living as she does, I cannot promise her length of days."

"Short and sweet, Dubois? Is not that one of your maxims?"

"No, Monseigneur; long and sweet."

"Tell me where that is for sale? Nay, I defy you to add a single day."

"To the sum of my life! I do not contradict you. But if I meet with a precipice on a journey, I should seek to avoid it rather than throw myself headlong over it."

Madame de Berri did not amend her ways. She committed a thousand puerilities, which seemed to denote that her mind was no less deranged than her health. She borrowed from the East; on one occasion, I heard a tumult of people and martial music in the street; I thought that some ambassador from China or Siam had arrived, or that Law was recommencing his Mississippi parades; I ran to the window, as did all the bastards, and was the witness of Madame de Berri's triumphal entry on a theatrical car drawn by white horses, escorted by her musketeers, with trumpets and cymbals. It might have been the festival of the goddess Ceres with all her Corybantes. She passed through Paris in this burlesque equipage. On another occasion, she came to the Opera on a dais borne by four Hercules of her household. When she received the ambassador from Venice, she insisted on having a platform on which to place her seat, a Princess of the Blood of France, as she said, being worth three doges of Venice.

These were not her only errors; I have spoken as discreetly as possible of her Luxembourg, and have not wished to dwell on it. But the *roués*, guards, lovers, lost women, nocturnal suppers, the mysteries of La Muette—all these will find an historian. We shall see whether Saint Simon will cast away his modesty when he has to touch in writing upon things which have not even been spoken; in any case, let him beware of the Bastille! The errors of the great are secrets of State. For myself, whether through the bitterness of old age, prudery, or discretion, there are things my right hand would not divulge to my left.

The Duchesse, by one of those inconceivable fatalities which the Duc d'Orléans believes in, married Riom, who had no other

merit than that of being a nephew of Lauzan. This marriage was contracted secretly; then the Regent had consented to it, for fear of displeasing his cherished daughter. Riom acquired a terrible influence over Madame de Berri, who let him mould her as she had been wax. Yet what attraction was there about Riom? The question should be asked of Madame de Polignac, who shut up this "toad's head," as Madame called him in her best German, for two days and two nights in her bed-chamber. Madame's expression paints the man. A skin spotted like a serpent's, oily like a negro's, changeable like a chameleon,—forsooth, a treasure! His turned-up nose and disproportionate mouth were all he had to make himself agreeable. His wit, moreover, is dull and coarse, and, above all, Gascon. With this equipment, he has the effrontery to play the Court dandy!

"My daughter," said Madame to the Duchesse, when they were on friendly terms, "your Riom has a face like a Chinese kite."

"I admit it," she answered; "but I am satisfied with it."

"So is your second lady-in-waiting, La Mouchy."

"Whoever would not be satisfied with it would be hard to please! I promise you that love with him is no painted business."

The Duchesse said, as her father had said of old, "I am not jealous; if one sits down to a good meal, the pieces you drop matter little to you; it would be a foolish person who would stoop to pick them up." To live up to this view, Riom had a score of mistresses, and his wife took no notice of it. She had by him two, or it may have been three children, who were concealed until the marriage should be declared. The deplorable death of the Duchesse frustrated all these projects. Madame de Berri was some months with child, and made a mystery of it, especially to her father; for this reason she abstained from no pleasure party, and would even gallop on horseback chasing "sausages"; it was thus she spoke of the wild boar, the flesh of which she was greedily fond of. Riom had departed for the war in Spain with the regiment she had bought him; the nights at the Luxembourg, Asnières, and La Muette were carried on as riotously as ever. The Duchesse did not escape with impunity from her imprudences, which were mere bravado. She had a miscarriage, as the result of a night

spent in the open air. At that period, pregnant women were so common at Court that no more notice was taken of them than of those who were not. When it was over, Madame de Berri, who had not recovered, and knew it, hastened to change her mode of life. For a certain period she went to the Carmelites of Chaillot, where she had a cell. Two or three of her ladies accompanied her, and there, for two or three days, she cloistered herself as though the game diverted her. The priests, who have an eye on kings' palaces, knew the indiscretions of the Duchesse better than anyone. They did not breathe a word, but kept at their post. At last they exclaimed at Madame de Berri's expeditions. The latter was in no whit disturbed, but repeated them. It was said that she took a chill by walking in a garden while it was raining; she was brought back to Paris ill, thence taken to Meudon. Two months later she lay in Saint-Denis!

Her illness was accompanied by peculiar symptoms; as she concealed the fact of her miscarriage until the end, the doctors treated her for dropsy; she had insufferable pains in every part of her body, even in her hair. Her feet were swollen with water. They next thought of gout; but neither baths, bleeding, nor drugs could be victorious over this unknown sickness, as terrible as that of which the Antiochus of Scripture died. The Regent, haunted by strange ideas, was persistently asking her the cause of her illness; she invented a hundred falsehoods, even going to say that in a certain condition she had eaten melons. La Mouchy, whose time was occupied in robbing her mistress, revealed the truth to nobody. She required ice to be put to the feet, mustard on the head; or else she delivered sermons to the dying woman, which began and ended with "Riom the toad's-head." She said to her once, very inappropriately:

"Is it true that you are married to Riom, who is no prince of the house of Arragon, but a younger son of Gascony?"

"Ah, Madame," she answered, "let that jest alone. Have I not the honour to be known by you as too proud to stoop so low?"

The illness, however, grew worse; the Duc d'Orléans, who was not blind to his daughter's condition, did not stir from Meudon. Madame de Berri asked for the sacraments, and promises were made to the clergy, who gave them after making some farcical objections. I never inquired into these sorts of details; the only

thing exacted was a renunciation of Riom. The sacraments were duly administered. There was matter to make the Regent feel devout; he too will end thus. The poor Duchesse had lost all her plumpness, and she was distressed at the sight of her skeleton hands and arms. An hour before her death she asked for a mirror, and smiled at her excessive leanness. An emetic they gave her hastened her death, which was an easy one; on the night of the 19th she called her father in a low voice, whispered in his ear, kissed him, and uttered a great sigh, which was her last. It is not she whom I pity, but her unhappy father. When I heard the storm which lasted all that night, I looked at my watch, which stood at half-past-two; I cried, with a presentiment I could not understand, "The Duchesse de Berri is dead!"

There was an autopsy of her body. The doctors were amazed that she had not died earlier. She was carried by night to Saint-Denis, without any pageant; her household escorted the bier. The loss was only felt by those who had known her intimately. Her lovers regretted her. When her funeral passed, La Mouchy, not content with having robbed her while she was alive, played the flute at her window. The Regent exiled her from Paris, as well as her husband. He ought to have hanged her as a sacrifice to his daughter's manes.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MLLE. DE VALOIS—HER PORTRAIT, AMOURS, AND HISTORY
—THE GRAND-DUCHESS OF FLORENCE—BETROTHAL OF
MLLE. DE VALOIS—HER REGRETS—HER JOURNEY TO
MODENA—MISTRESSES OF THE REGENT—MADAME DE
PARABÈRE—LA SOURIS IS CARRIED OFF BY RICHELIEU—
EMILIE: HER PORTRAIT—THE REGENT AS *WERE-WOLF*—
MADAME DE DEFFANT

IF Madame de Berri had not died so suddenly, Mademoiselle de Valois would not have married the Prince of Modena. It was a hastily arranged marriage; as impolitic as it was useless, and I am glad to think I took no part in it. Madame achieved this noble performance by herself, and neither her son nor her grand-daughter have ever forgiven her. Yet she meant it for the best.

Mademoiselle de Valois—Princess of Modena as she is now—was a reproduction of Madame de Montespan, with the blemishes, the indolence, and indifference of her mother. She had a romantic mind in addition: at the age of twelve she knew things of which a young girl should be ignorant; of things, which at her age she should have known, she was ignorant. Richelieu, and someone else besides, formed her education; the rest she did herself. She is not a beauty, not even a pretty woman, but she is appetising, tantalising, and I am hardly astonished that she should have met with all the love she could have desired. Her eyes have I know not what alluring charm, and the rose of her complexion well matches a satin skin. In spite of her innate indifference, she ought to grow tired of smiling all the time. This perpetual smile would be a more pleasant attraction, were it not for a large and hideous tooth like the tusk of a wild boar; her nose resembles that of a beak of prey; her legs are as long as a swan's; her body is big and thick set; briefly, her figure is imperfect, *gauche*, and clumsy, and, none the less, she pleases. Her wit would be greater if she was at the pains to show it; but everything wearies her, even her own person; as for singing, dancing, studies, they

are as nought to her, and I know nothing but a love affair which can dispel her apathy, which is greater than I can describe.

She carried on an affair of gallantry with Richelieu which was known to the town, the public, and the Court. The Regent—*débonnaire* as the song has it—had done his utmost to thwart a passion which vexed him. Neither Richelieu's alleged marriage with Mademoiselle de Charolais, nor his visit to the Bastille, nor his exile, could cool Mademoiselle de Valois' passion for him; the entreaties and commands of her father had not the power that absence had over her heart. His Highness was not discouraged by the slanders the du Maines disseminated everywhere. Ever since the death of his beloved Berri, he shed bitter tears into the bosom of his younger daughter, and was as constant in his visits to Chelles as in his interviews with Mademoiselle de Valois, who was still holding secret interviews with Richelieu. All the time he was at Conflans with the Cardinal de Noailles, who almost performed the part of a go-between, this most gallant of dukes sallied forth every night and consecrated it to his mistresses. Soon afterwards, he was removed to Saint-Germain-en-Laye; as he was better guarded there, Mademoiselle de Valois had to manoeuvre in order to see him, and found him even more in love than before. The Duc d'Orléans was not slow in hearing of this arrangement, and I presume that he repented him of not having cut off one of Richelieu's four heads. The little Valois was unceasing in her entreaties for the complete pardon of her lover, whom she refused to believe unfaithful. The good father, little used enough to contradict her, contradicted himself by recalling the *Duc de Conflans*, as I called him since his exile. I have not the audacity to describe what happened in Mademoiselle de Valois' bed-chamber, which Madame entered unexpectedly; it was not Richelieu whom she saw there. But instead of flying into a German passion, she choked with laughter, and said to her grand-daughter: "My pet, it is time you were married, high time; I shall take the first prince who offers, unless he is club-footed like Scarron—God rest his soul!"

I have related the death of the Maintenon,* but I forgot to add that this death delighted Madame without appeasing her hatred; she spoke of her always with the same violence; and, but for her

* This passage is missing in the manuscript. Madame de Maintenon died on the 15th of April 1719.

and Madame du Maine, no one would have thought to wonder whether Scarron's widow still existed at Saint-Cyr or not. It was there only that her loss was felt.

Madame brought her huge correspondence to work, and, if she had dared, she would have hired public criers to inform Europe that Mademoiselle de Valois was ripe for marriage. But in default of this expedient she sent one or two portraits of her grand-daughter to Italy; she was as flattered by the painters as by the courtiers. Whilst these portraits went to knock at the doors of every Court, Mademoiselle de Valois was in despair, Richelieu was in despair, and the Duc d'Orléans more than all. There was nothing to be seen but red eyes; in truth, the father appeared more inconsolable than the lover, and this lasted until the arrival of the courier who demanded the Valois' hand in the name of the Prince of Modena, who had fallen in love with the portrait, in the absence of the original. Madame scolded His Highness fiercely, because of the poor example he set of resignation. The Prince knew that he had more than one error to atone for; he wiped his eyes, bit his lips, and returned to Chelles to bear his ill with patience. Richelieu, whose ambition it had been to marry Mademoiselle de Valois, renounced his idea without doing himself too much violence; for he is as light as a soap-bubble. Mademoiselle de Valois continued her correspondence with her lover, who was the first to interrupt it. Their amours were maintained in despite of everybody, and, judging from the languid air and pale face of the *fiancée*, the nights, as Madame said, were not spent in weeping.

The Grand-Duchess of Florence had left her husband there and her duchy to return to France in search of a knave whom she loved; I have been told he was a sacristan. She preferred her sacristan and a modest pension, which was not paid her by her Grand-Duke, to all Italy, not excepting the Holy See. Pray what had Italy done to her? She despised it so heartily that Madame prevented her from seeing Mademoiselle de Valois before her departure. The Grand-Duchess was delighted, for, as she said, "If the new Princess of Modena commits a folly, a thing of which I think her most capable, they will not fail to attribute it to my advice, and her aunt, the Grand-Duchess, will become responsible for her conduct. I prefer not to see her; I am too frank to persuade her to Italianise herself; let her make a child

or two, and they will not stand in the way of her return to Paris."

The ceremony of the betrothal and the signing of the contract took place before the King in the month of February; Valois was to set off two days later. Her betrothal resembled an interment. The Prince of Modena's presents, however, were no paltry ones, for a little princeling as he was; the handsomest part of them was not his own portrait, which a garnishment of diamonds could not embellish; this made Richelieu say that it was doubtless the sign of the jeweller. This witticism did not amuse Mademoiselle de Valois, whose sole nourishment for the last three days had been tears. The cry escaped her:

"The Valois are never happy! Italy has always been baneful to them!"*

She delayed her signature to the last moment, and cast down her pen upon her name in such a fashion that it left a blot of ink.

"It is nothing," she said, with a laugh; "my signature wears mourning for me."

"What will the husband wear?" I asked of Guémené, the friend of Richelieu.

It might have been a betrothal of the dead.

The Chevalier d'Orléans had to escort her to Italy, and do honour to his title of General of the Galleys; but his sister had vowed to God and Richelieu that she would not travel yet. She went to say farewell to the Abbess of Chelles, who had had the measles, which she caught, and thought of being laid in Saint-Denis rather than of starting for Modena. Two letters from Richelieu were better remedies than the prescriptions of Hippocrates. A third letter fell into the hands of Madame, who was so indignant that we were led to fear an attack of apoplexy.

"It was all very well," said she, "when my grand-daughter was still playing with her doll; but now she is Princess of Modena, and Richelieu would make at least one Valois more if the marriage fell through by his fault. But by the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, let him dare to try!"

She wrote to the Duc, forbidding him to come near her grand-daughter if he did not want to be hunted down like a wolf.

The *fiancée*, barely convalescent, recovered her colour and her

* She doubtless alluded to Henri II and his three sons, victims of their mother, Catherine de Medici.

gaiety, then set off on her journey under the conduct of her natural brother. At their departure there was kissing and weeping, and an exchange of farewells and good wishes. The Regent accompanied his last remaining daughter as far as Longjumeau, and would have followed her to her destination, if Madame had not sent in pursuit of him. The separation was only a sorrowful one on his side. I have always believed that Richelieu, in disguise, had enrolled himself in the suite of the Princess, and his manner of defence, when I declared my suspicions to him, only served to confirm them. The strongest proof, to my mind, is that the journey would not have been so prolonged if he had not been there. Neither can I otherwise explain his absence from Paris at that season. Italians are right to be jealous as—Italians. Whilst we waited for news from Modena, there came a piteous letter from the bridegroom asking his wife of the echoes, and in a mighty hurry to see her in his little realm. It was thus we discovered the peregrinations of the Princess, who, according to the epigram of the Grand-Duchess of Florence, wished to see everything except her husband; she had written to her father, who had not revealed it, that she intended to visit the whole of Provence, down to the least cockle-shell. The Duc d'Orléans also conceived a suspicion that only the Duc de Richelieu could take her so far afield.

"The man with four heads," said he, "is as mad as any other man with only one."

"The Duc de Conflans, Monseigneur, is doing penance in some corner."

"Precisely; he must be on a pilgrimage to Sainte-Baume."

Meanwhile, His Highness wrote, in the language of an incensed father, to his daughter, to hasten and meet her husband, who was awaiting her incognito at Genoa.

Suddenly, Richelieu reappeared at the Palais-Royal.

"Whence come you, Monsieur?" asked the Regent.

"I swear, not from the Bastille, Monseigneur."

As his arrival in Paris forecast that of the Princess at Modena, there was no attempt made to discover his traces.

Before any news was received from the bride, the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, whose epigrams were admirable, prophesied in these terms: "In the days of the Regency, not ours, but that of the Queen-Mother, when the Prince de Condé and his brother

the Prince de Conti were sent to the Bastille, the latter asked for an *Imitation of Jesus Christ*; the Prince de Condé, amused at this piety, asked for an *Imitation of the Duc de Beaufort*, who had just left the Bastille; as for our Princess of Modena, when she is thoroughly nauseated with Italy, she will ask for an *Imitation of the Grand-Duchess to return to France*."

As a matter of fact, she wrote volumes to everybody, after her grandmother's example, and the whole Court echoed with her complaints; her letters had for sole refrain: "I am bored to extinction!" His Highness gave me the particulars of her nuptial night; it was like to give me my death of laughing: Grécourt would make a fine story out of it. The next day the Prince was more delighted than she had given him any cause to be.

"Fie on you!" she said, "can you be so ill bred as to love your wife like a tradesman in the Cité? At Paris, you would be mocked at."

"Why should one marry then?" asked the unhappy husband.

"To get children when one is able to get them."

None the less, he succeeded in taming her, and she admitted in her third letter that her Prince had human qualities, and that they would get on together. His Highness was afraid of some imprudence on the part of Richelieu, and wished him to give up the letters and portraits of Mademoiselle de Valois in his possession; but Richelieu swore so loudly that he had returned them all, that he made a semblance of believing him; I did not, knowing him too well to deem that he would ever despoil himself of his amorous genealogy, as he called it; he looks upon them as standards captured from the enemy.

Richelieu divulged an adventure which should have sufficed to convince me that he was a fellow-traveller of the bride; he was even careless enough to put himself in the place of the narrator. Salvatico, the envoy of the Prince of Modena, was a madman, whose whole person suggested the burlesque. The choice of such a favourite was not to his master's honour. He had a face a foot long, stuck upon a crane's neck; he did not walk, he popped; he bowed to the very ground, and spoke, from the depths of his belly, a sorry French dialect enough, more Gascon than Italian. He was presented to Mademoiselle de Valois one morning when she was stretched upon the sofa, with one leg, almost naked,

hanging down, this leg filled his thoughts till the next day, and he fell in love with it. The Prince of Modena was set on fire by the perusal of his envoy's letters. His *fiancée* let him sigh as long as he liked; and Madame, who, like everybody else, remarked Salvatico's condition, was annoyed at it, and begged her granddaughter to conciliate him, because he might bring reports to the Prince of the nature of Mademoiselle de Valois' reputation. The latter stood on no ceremony with him, and his mouth was closed; indeed, he redoubled his eulogies, with each fresh fact he learned concerning her. Salvatico was her second shadow; he escorted her to her bed-chamber, and passed one night outside her door. Everyone made fun of the poor ninny; ladies made declarations to him, which he took as seriously meant, and which he repulsed with horror. I kept him for two days in the seclusion of his apartment, because I had had him warned to be on his guard, as Madame de Polignac wanted to run away with him. He complained to the Regent, who promised him a safe conduct. Finally, Mademoiselle de Valois was not yet ten leagues from Paris before he declared himself, in the presence of a maid-of-honour, whom Richelieu did not name, but who might very well have been himself.

"Ah, ah! Madame," said he.

"What is it?" asked the Princess.

"Ah, ah, ah! My dear lady!"

"What do you mean with all these *ah, ahs*?"

The maid-of-honour said to him, in good plain French: "Rogue, if you had your deserts I would cut off your two ears!"

The only revenge of the Princess was to make a butt of him, and, under the pretext of a rendezvous, she kept him up and about all the night. . . .

I have just left His Royal Highness, whom I found in the company of three new female figures, one blonde, another dark, the third auburn. It made me reflect that did I not hasten to write down a list of the Regent's mistresses I should forget more than half of them. They are already more numerous than all the young ladies of the Court, who are no tigresses to anybody, least of all to the Regent. 'Tis not that he deserves, by his personal attractions, to play the Adonis at the age of forty-eight: "*Good-bye to the baskets, the vintage is over!*" He is no longer even the shadow of what he was under the name and in the dress of M. Lucas. How times have changed!

Madame de Parabère, whom the Regent still loves by fits and starts, after a habit, if not a constancy, of eight years, had been of great assistance in ridding me of Mademoiselle de Sery, who had become an affected peacock in becoming Comtesse d'Argenton. She read romances night and day, and wished to live them after the fashion of the shepherds of Astrea; she slept upon a sofa painted like grass, and in a room representing trees and sheep-folds; then, when the Regent arrived, she would softly recite to him verses from the Eclogues of Fontenelle, would talk of *tender flames*, the *sensitive heart*, and dish up all the mawkishness of the operas. His Royal Highness was disgusted by this diet of gallant speeches; he had not been brought up to fall at a woman's feet and coo his love in turtle-dove fashion. As I have said, he dismissed his shepherdess countess, and gave himself partially to the Parabère; I know not one of them who possessed him altogether. Before knowing him, Madame de Parabère had been, or passed for being, virtuous; she had not profited in the school of her mother, Madame de La Vieuville, lady-in-waiting to Madame de Berri; and when she married M. de Parabère, she thought, it was said, that children were made in the ear-hole. Her husband was indifferent to everything, save what bore upon gluttony or drunkenness, but credulous as any clown of Paris. His wife yielded to the example set her; at the suppers in the Luxembourg, she was known as the *Barrel*, because, glass in hand, she would rival the most insatiable tipplers; but she did not keep her head long, and was slow to recover. I have mentioned that the Regent taught her the art of adding a further love to the love of wine.

Shortly before the Regency, he gave a great nocturnal gala, at which Parabère and his wife assisted. The latter intoxicated the Duc d'Orléans with her glances, and that without prejudice to the wine he drank to screw up his courage. He felt in a fitting humour to lead the dance; all the guests, both men and women, were heavy with the fumes of the banquet. I was the only Cato capable of reading without spectacles. Parabère was without sight or hearing; Madame de Parabère being seated next to the Prince, the moment was favourable.

"Dubois," said His Highness, "have Parabère carried to a bed."

"Which bed?"

"Not my wife's, scurvy questioner."

"But, Monseigneur, the poor man could drink another five or six bottles."

"No; I have an interest in looking after his precious health; take him away and put him to bed."

I went up to Parabère, and cried: "Heavens! how pale you are! Can you be ill?"

"I!"

"Unless it is I who have something wrong with my eyes."

"To be sure," said the others, "Parabère is ill."

"Yes," interposed Madame de Parabère, "my poor husband is very far from well."

"His pulse is terribly agitated," I added.

"He must be carried into a room and put to bed," went on the Duc d'Orléans, in the same tones.

"He is fainting," I cried; and, making a sign to the lackeys, I had him carried on to the Prince's bed. The latter followed us, as well as the worthy Madame de Parabère, who feigned anxiety. The drunkard opened eyes that were as bright as basilisks, and made no resistance; I undressed him and put him to bed. I know not at what hour his wife rejoined him; but in the morning he found her lying conjugally at his side, full of admiration for the hospitality of the Duc d'Orléans; and, as blessings come when we sleep, Parabère was richer than he had been the night before, by a huge diamond, worth three thousand louis and something else. The diamond was a present destined for Madame d'Orléans, who did not forgive this larceny in favour of her husband's "little black crow"; this was the name she had bestowed on Madame de Parabère. The lady sought for some invention to account for the origin of the diamond; she went coaxingly to her husband, who was now only half drunk; she asked him adroitly for a few louis to buy some trinkets which were being offered her at such a low price, that so fine an opportunity might not occur again. Parabère, with a drunkard's generosity, drained his purse to content his wife. The lady had no sooner obtained the sum than she flaunted her diamond before all the society of the Palais-Royal. Madame d'Orléans had a pang of heart-ache when she saw the ring on Madame de Parabère's finger.

"That is an admirable stone," she said, thinking to embarrass her; "where did you get it?"

"My husband gave it me," replied the Parabère, drily.

"He makes you *princely* presents," went on the Duchesse in the same tone.

"Oh! Madame," retorted the Parabère, "it cost us extremely little."

"I very much doubt it, Madame," interrupted Madame d'Orléans.

"Between a hundred and two hundred louis," said the husband innocently.

"You do not tell us all," cried the Princess; "that diamond is worth at least three thousand louis."

"Madame," replied Parabère, turning to his wife, "I was right in maintaining you had made a good bargain."

The laughs were in clover; and the least perspicacious guessed what Madame de Parabère had paid for her ring.

This lady is beginning to age, although she is not yet old; but ever since her first child she has been fading day by day; no one does as she does with impunity. Her husband died of indigestion; since then she has been able to accept diamonds without keeping up appearances. She was incessantly with the Duchesse de Berri, who treated her like a sister. She did not content herself with the Regent only, who did not content himself with her; the ever-green Nocé was the most assiduous of her gallants. It was no fault of hers that he was not exiled. To obtain his pardon, she forcibly entered the Prince's bed; but she was so ambitious and rapacious that my threats made her change her key. I told her very frankly, that if she was anxious to rejoin Nocé, I would be enchanted to procure her that little pleasure; she held her tongue and remained. She was only cruel with those who asked nothing from her. With her I adopted the saying of the Bible: *Petite et accipietis*. I even received the interest on the principal, for in the Regent's presence she dared to give me a blow. I was at that time Archbishop of Cambrai.

"Madame," I said in anger, "I thought with us it was the Archbishops who confirmed."

"You are not an Archbishop."

"What am I then, my sweet?"

"You are called Dubois in the fish-market; here we give you your true name."

The quarrel flamed out; I was trembling for my eyes, for they are the mark of women who have nails. The Regent made peace between us. The honourable lady was not exempt from the reproaches that were heaped on me. Our reconciliation was sealed with an embrace. Has it not been said, somewhere or other, "A kingdom divided against itself will not stand."

Parabère was dark, bronzed even like a Spanish woman; her locks of a raven blackness fell in waves to her garters; she did them up into soft and shiny pyramids. She is small and slender, with grace itself in her most brusque movements. Her eyes have a life-giving fire, like the rays of the sun stolen by Prometheus. They are adorable eyes, large and well-set, with lashes of a rare length, and perfectly designed eyebrows. Her nose was seducing before she deformed it by dint of fouling it with snuff. Her mouth, adorned with pearly teeth, has been ruined, and her lips have acquired a violet tint. The amount of intelligence she has will not kill her. His Royal Highness got on excellently with her, "because," said he, "I have no love of those clacking women who talk like books. Parabère pleases me almost by her silence, because she has nothing to say." However, whether because they were put in her mouth, or that wit came to her by fits and starts, I know some excellent remarks attributed to her.

"The Regent," said she, at a supper party, "is a combination of King David and King Solomon: he plays every sort of instrument; he dances, not before the Ark, but everywhere; he eats and drinks, and amuses himself, and takes no thought of the morrow. I will add that, unlike Solomon, he has not seven hundred concubines."

"What is the use of piling up treasure you cannot use?" retorted the Prince; "I should have more than seven hundred had I the wherewithal to occupy them. In revenge, I have no Bathsheba like David."

"Nay, you forget, Monseigneur," interrupted Richelieu, "that if I am not yet dead, like Urias, it is not your fault."

The joke was a little bitter, and if, amongst the female guests, Richelieu had not been able to count three mistresses, he would have paid dearly for an unreasonable comparison.

I will not dwell upon Mesdames de Nesle, Polignac, Guébriant, and a host of others, who have not paid tribute to the Regent alone; it came to such a point that one might have gone out in

search of a man at the Palais-Royal, like Diogenes in the streets of Athens. The amusing thing, to my mind, is that Richelieu was always the advance-guard in the Prince's amours, as though he had gone out to reconnoitre the ground. Thus, at each new escapade of His Highness, he used to say: "A year, two, three years ago, I was as happy as the Regent! It is I who plucked the corn in the blade!"

Madame de Sabran did not succeed to Madame de Parabère, the *inevitable*, but was, for some months, a rival with her in the good graces of the Duc d'Orléans, who had always one on his right and the other on his left hand. Madame de Sabran professed to be a native of Provence; but I think she rather came in a direct line from La Fillon's establishment. Her husband was a man who could be led by the nose and ears, which were of an Arcadian vastness; otherwise, a worthy gentleman. "Ah, gentlemen," said the Regent, "honour is not there where it is woman's pleasure to place it!" However, as Sabran, determined to see his wife somebody's mistress, preferred to fix upon a Prince of the Blood, he deserves more reproach than his wife, if he deserves any, which is hypothetical. Madame de Sabran is a sort of excellent wench, with no other merit than her great beauty, no other virtue than her inconstancy, no other talent than that of pleasing those who see her. An air of effrontery, bold eyes: this is what turned the head of His Highness; she does not talk, but sows sentences in a pretty Gascon accent, which brings back to me my old acquaintances of Bordeaux. The resemblance is exact in the matter of expressions, which one is astonished to hear fall from cherry lips. To swear would be a small matter; but she employs the language of places of ill-fame, dirty epithets, which I am weak enough to like, and which made Madame de Berri explode with laughter. The Regent took a pleasure in answering her in the same tone, and the things the two together said would put the paper to the blush. Come, Dubois, my dear Cardinal, you are become almost an honest man, for Diogenes has said that red was the colour of virtue: to wit, the hats of Cardinals.

I refrained from having the least relation with Madame de Sabran, who would have treated me, according to her own expression, like a lackey or a Prince of the Blood; she declared that these two extremes were fashioned out of the same mud.

She neglected no means, however, of obtaining presents of money and jewels. It is thus, with an audacity beyond all conception, she obtained for her most honourable husband the post of Chamberlain. The scene was burlesque in the extreme. The Regent, who had passed the night with La Souris, the dancing-girl, had barricaded his door; for I know not whether I have related in these memoirs the dread he had of being disturbed, while closeted with his loves. He had so often repeated to me, in answer to my reproaches as to his prodigality, that at certain moments one could obtain anything from him, even the impossible, that I put it to the test in order to obtain the mitre of the Archbishop of Cambrai. Sabran was doubtless aware of this foible of His Royal Highness, for at an early hour she went and knocked at the Prince's door; it was all in vain. Her shouts were no more successful. She went away like a she-wolf who has been robbed of her cubs. I was at the audience of His Highness, when M. de Sabran arrived, with the shyness of a seminarist, holding a letter from his wife in form of recommendation.

"How is Madame de Sabran?" asked the Prince.

"Monseigneur," replied the husband, "she is gone to confession."

"Take care, M. de Sabran, that she does not tell our sins instead of her own."

"Ah, Monseigneur, the confessor is one of my friends." He delivered his letter, and the Regent read it, and choked with laughter.

"What is the matter, Monseigneur," cried Sabran, pretending to be surprised; "have I made a mistake in the paper? Show me, if you please. . . ."

"No; it is no use; I was laughing at the annoyance M. de Lambert will feel; he is soliciting the post of Chamberlain of my household; I give it to you."

"To me, Monseigneur!"

"Faith? Not to Madame de Sabran."

"What goodness!"

"We are under no obligation to each other, I assure you."

When M. de Sabran had departed, as joyously as possible, His Highness handed me the letter, which I have preserved as a curiosity. Here it is, slightly modified:

"I went to you this morning, my thoroughbred; your door

was shut to me; if ever you visit me, you will have the same fate. I would sooner sleep all my life with M. de Sabran than once with you, old libertine. Dare you reply? But you can neither love nor write. If you can read, read this. I am sending you my lout of a husband; make a Chamberlain of him, since you have made him a cuckold."*

I find it a pretty jest that the husband should have been made the bearer of this missive. Nevertheless, in spite of these insults, Madame de Sabran had signed a treaty of peace with this *thoroughbred*, long before the sun was up, which rose before they did.

The Duc d'Orléans, faithful to my principles, put a great value on the dancing-girls of the Opera, who would have sold father and mother to him. His Highness seldom went behind the scenes, because all these girls were authorised to call him *Philippe*. Some busybody thought fit to give them a lesson in manners, and met with this reply:

"Really! How can one call a man one has seen at one's feet, *Monseigneur*?"

"Those devilish dancers," I cried, "think of nothing but their feet!"

Amongst the thousand and one goddesses whom the Prince treated as mortals, I have taken no notice of any but La Souris and Emilie. To fix the dates of all these gallant affairs would require a chronologist. I will speak of it to the author of the *Method of Studying History*, that rogue De Lenglet-Dufresnoy, agent of the Duchesse du Maine, a knave and a liar, who stole my money from me, at the time of the Cellamare conspiracy, under the pretext of revelations, which he never made. I will have him walled up alive in the Bastille. This miserable Abbé has everything that great lords lack, understanding and wit, but he will never be more than an Abbé and pamphleteer.

La Souris, *the mouse*, only bore that name on account of her nimbleness and charm; besides, she had a horror of rats and mice; so much so, that she had a miscarriage because her namesake once ran up her legs. She is a marvellous dancer, the darling of the pit, because, in her capers, she lets her skirt fly to the winds. She is graceful to her very finger-tips, and it is worth going twenty

* This letter struck me at first as a monstrous invention of Mercier; my astonishment was great when I found it among M. de Maurepas' manuscripts in the Bibliothèque du Roi. How a few lines depict an epoch! [*Editor's Note.*]

leagues to see her when she dances the minuet. Her face is nothing wonderful; everything is faulty; but in her small eyes and mouth, as in her little hands and feet, there is a pleasant promise which did not deceive the Regent. He carried her off from two or three men who had been enriched by Law's bank, and built a bridge of gold in order to take her to the house which Thevenart of the Opera had at Auteuil. Thevenart drew freely of the favours of the goddess, who would have let herself be seduced by a Satyr, rather than fall out of practice. La Souris flaunted so insolent a luxury, carriages, lackeys, and armorial bearings, that twenty discarded mistresses charged Richelieu with their vengeance. The latter chose the moment of a ball given by Thevenart at the Duc d'Orléans' expense. La Souris gorged herself with the pleasure of seeing so many embroidered coats prostrated in reverence before her; illuminations transformed the little house into an enchanted palace, and fireworks gave a fairy-like effect. Richelieu, who might have said, "good rat to the good cat," decoyed La Souris into a thicket, threw himself at her feet, made her a declaration, in order to give his people time to open a little gate where a phaeton was in waiting. La Souris, not knowing what was required of her, waited until she saw herself carried off by the light vehicle before she struggled and cried for aid against the ravisher. The countryside was deserted, and the Bois de Boulogne found the nymph in a better mood. She submitted, when there was no longer any remedy, to the temerities of the Duc, who crowned his work by taking his conquest to his Hôtel, where she spent the night in making fun of a Royal Highness. The *fête* of Auteuil received a disagreeable interruption; the Prince adopted a philosophical course: "They are wrong," he said, "in believing this girl was exhausting my health; my purse, perhaps; but I will have no more of this Opera food." Two days later, a love as keen began between him and Emilie, another dancing-girl, as voluptuous as a Circassian, from the Seraglio of Constantinople. Richelieu made no secret of his abduction; the Regent displayed no anger with him. It was thought that Mademoiselle de Valois had excused the impudence of her Duc; but, without seeking so far for what is near at hand, I imagine that the Duc d'Orléans was tired of La Souris, although not to such an extent as she was of him.

To La Souris succeeded Emilie, the greek statue of the Opera,

as Richelieu called her; he had not succeeded in lighting the least flame in her. The Regent, however, chilled as he was, was satisfied with this new mistress, who spoke little, listened as much as could be wished, had a hand ever open, and no will of her own. Emilie was tall, a real Minerva of Opera, without an apparent fault, and with a skin like white marble; she knew no such thing as jealousy, and if the Prince had lain with the whole universe, she would have only said to him: "Take your time; don't disturb yourself; I will wait." She made no demands, but accepted everything; she had more reading than most women of her condition, and quoted the histories of Rome and France. Richelieu had loved her; the Duc de Melun had loved her; Firmaçon loved her to madness, to fury; it was she who provided him with resources to keep up the princely expenditure he indulged in, even when he was a page; but, as Firmaçon was with the army of Spain, the Regent was not molested in his amours.

His Royal Highness had a singular esteem for Emilie, who gave him advice like the general of an army; the good wench cited Alcibiades and the elder Cato with the gravity of an Aulic counsellor. One morning I sent a request for a moment's conversation with the Duc d'Orléans, who granted me it at once, although he was in bed with a lady who was not Madame d'Orléans. I was but little embarrassed by these kinds of witnesses, who used to hide behind the curtains, whilst I spoke in a low voice of affairs; but this time the matter of which I had to treat was delicate, and more secret than if it had been a question of nominating me as Pope. I entered, however, with a majestic step, into the chamber in which the amorous exercises of the Regent were conducted. I saw the loveliest female form it were possible to behold, not excluding the houris of Mahomet. I was so dazzled that I hid my face in my hands, to collect my thoughts: I was not then Archbishop of Cambrai. "Look as much as you like, Dubois," said the Prince, "but let us talk of business." During this address, Emilie—for I recognised her face—neither moved nor closed her eyes; it was a picture worthy of Carlo Vanloo, or rather of my little Boucher, who does nudes so well.

"Pardon me, Monseigneur," I answered; "I am not wanted here; I will retire."

"I dare you to," cried the Prince, in a voice which brought me up short in a meditation; "Emilie, catch hold of his stock."

"I am no Potiphar's wife," replied the actress, "to seize the mantle of a new Joseph."

"But! Monseigneur," I went on, "I came on important business."

"Very well," said the Prince; "produce your important business."

"But, Monseigneur, I cannot in presence . . ."

"Proceed, nevertheless; our Emilie is discreet; she has wit and judgment, and has lain in the bosom of history; perhaps she will give us good advice."

"Does Philippe, then," said she, "think I have as much discretion as the youthful Papirius in the Roman Senate?"

"A plague on it!" cried the Regent, "who would believe that there is the learning of a Benedictine in it? Well, what brings you here at such an hour?"

"Monseigneur," I stammered, "I came to suggest to you . . ."

"Ask him what, Emilie."

"To suggest a mistress to you."

"Good! This deserves attention. Can she rival Emilie?"

"Monseigneur, I have not even been in a position to judge; but she has been recommended to me by Madame de Tencin; a pretty wit . . ."

"O Heaven! Pretty wits do not often inhabit pretty bodies."

"You will change your opinion in favour of Madame de Deffant, who, as yet, has played no part in politics."

"Ah! you call that a part in politics. What do you think of it, Emilie?"

"I think, Monseigneur," replied the philosophical dancing-girl, "that it does not cost much to go and see."

"I see that it costs you nothing; well, we will see."

I admired the indifference, whether real or assumed, of this courtesan, who advised her lover to have another mistress; it seems to me that, without troubling to go into the evidence of the case, I should have kept to Emilie.

She was no prude, and could only be compared with Laïs or Phryne; she loved money, and would have sold her soul to obtain it. In the course of an orgy, at which I was not present, the Prince said: "Gentlemen, are you aware that Emilie is the most beautiful woman of the Court?"

"Of the Opera, you mean to say?" answered Nocé, who favoured the Parabère.

"No; I maintain that she has not a rival, and I will prove it to you when you like."

"Monseigneur, tell these gentlemen that I was born, at the same time as Venus, from the foam of the sea."

"I accept the foam," said Nocé.

"Let he who has eyes see! Emilie, undo your dress, and take care not to drop the bank-notes."

There was no false shame; Emilie raised her dress to the level of her head, to receive the shower of paper which the Prince flung to her, before everyone's eyes. Emilie gained more than twenty thousand livres almost without a thought.

The Regent's love for this girl lasted for about six months, until Firmaçon returned from Spain more amorous than ever. He fell into a furious passion. "Strumpet," he cried, "since you have shared the leavings of the Parabère and the Sabran, I will make a *rouée* of you!" And he rained blows on her, and confined her in a convent at Charenton, where he mounted guard at the doors lest any one should approach his mistress. "I never run after a harlot," said the Regent to me, "but at the first opportunity I will send Firmaçon to the convent." And he had him confined in the Bastille for having, in the Tuileries, struck with his cane a gentleman who was reviling his name.

At this period, after Madame de Berri's death, the Regent passed for a monster, a devourer of human flesh, a drinker of blood. As a Cardinal cannot roam about the streets, I do not know whether this horrid opinion still prevails, but it was horribly inrooted in the people in 1720, as I had occasion to prove. Shortly after my elevation to the Archbishopric of Cambrai, I was forced to go incognito through the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. I was in the garb of a cit, and was delayed until nightfall. As I passed by a shop, I heard my name and that of the Regent pronounced to the tune of tears and gnashing of teeth; it was the mother of a family correcting her little boy and admonishing a daughter of eighteen.

"Wretch," she said to her son, "if you are not good, I will have you eaten up by the Were-wolf, Croquemitaine, or the Regent."

"What is the Regent?" asked the child.

"He is a demon, who will eat your heart, as easily as he would a thrush, and carry you off to Hell with him. As for you, baggage," she said to her daughter, "if you go out again at night, you will be carried off by some *Cambrai*." (Since my consecration, this was the name given to certain fish sold in the markets.)

"Good mother," replied the girl, "you frighten me with Dubois and the Regent, just as if I were ten years old."

"You will see, unhappy girl, these incarnate devils will carry you off."

"Not to Hell, I hope?"

"No; but to the Luxembourg, where they cut women in pieces; to the Palais-Royal, where they worship Satan in the form of a ram; to Saint-Cloud . . ."

"Bah, mother! I have seen the Regent at the Opera, and, I assure you, he is not as ugly as my cousin, whom they want to make me marry."

"I repeat it; it is your destiny; the Duc d'Orléans will make a lost girl of you, and I shall die of grief."

This dialogue reminded me of the fable of the wolf, the mother, and the child, and I hastened to make off for fear of being recognised. There would have been a cry of "Wolf." On the morrow, however, having related my adventure to the Regent, who laughed boisterously at it, the whim seized him to see this girl. She was brought to him; she was not ugly, and I think she was not dissatisfied with the two days she spent with a Prince of the Blood.

Madame de Deffant obtained what she wished from His Highness; but I repented of the negotiation. The Deffant did not even thank me for what I had done for her, although I had been inclined to do more; she merely said to Madame de Tencin: "My dear, your Archbishop never told me that I should have to put up with competition; there are five or six of them scrambling for the pieces." This lady, who had been very young when she married the Marquis de Deffant, was very young when she began to enjoy life and her beauty; I did not, however, like her cat-like face, with its curved nose, her bird's mouth, and the two gleaming and expressionless eyes which might have been made of glass. She called herself a philosopher, because she did not believe in virtuous women, as though that

had been an article of faith. La Fillon has the same philosophy. The de Defant, moreover, adds practice to theory; any one more frankly shameless I do not know. She surrounds herself with learned men, song-writers, poets, and academicians; she devotes herself to the interests of all the wits. The Regent was disgusted as soon as he had tasted her; did she not wish to uphold a thesis against him, as to whether Arouet or Lamothe was the greater genius? His Highness replied *ad rem* to this blue-stocking, but he could not quite get rid of her without her leaving him one of her pupils, Madame d'Averne, by whose name he still swears, as they swore of old by Styx. It must be quite understood that, during all these relations, the former mistresses retained many of their attributes; thus he had to exile the Parabère in order that he might cease having her on his hands, and in his bed, in spite of himself.

Madame d'Averne, whose reign came to an end last year, was, is, and always will be, a master mind; she plays the prude to the world, and the first time she received the Duc d'Orléans, she said to him, as she pushed him away: "Monseigneur, let me make my prayer to God." Madame de Defant, although younger, surpassed herself in this education. Madame d'Averne, before she knew her, had been no more respectful of her husband's authority; Richelieu, as usual, had preceded His Royal Highness in this lady's intimacy. She had the carriage of a Queen of Sheba; she was imposing rather than beautiful, well-made rather than graceful; her expression was inert, lacking in animation, her eyes were false and changeable; her cheeks pale; but she had, to the lover's eye, a mighty attractive bust. I see that I am speaking of all these ladies in the past tense, as though they were all dead; but, thank God! they are alive, and will outlive me, I suppose; but one may say of a woman who has lived hard for a period of six years, that she is somewhat on the wane, and this until she has quite passed away. I return to Madame d'Averne; may the Regent not imitate me there! She is skilled in acquiring, and the Treasury was not rid of her for less than three millions. Her husband esteems himself, if not highly honoured, at least greatly enriched by his wife's dishonour. His Royal Highness was wrong in letting himself be subjugated and tyrannised over by this princess, who would fain draw up a lease, as though it had been a question of a country house. She

would have liked to rout all the mistresses, past, present, and to come, as she had exiled the Parabère, who had only said that Madame d'Averne smelt of sulphur. She could not endure that Madame de Sabran should sit in a box at the Opera with the Duc d'Orléans; she eased her bile in little epigrams as sour as a serpent's saliva. In despair, one night, at seeing the Regent at such close quarters with Madame de Sabran, that all the spectators believed she had once more become mistress-in-chief, Madame d'Averne said loudly:

"If I had the misfortune to lose the favour of His Royal Highness, I should appear no more in the world."

"You might reappear anywhere," retorted Madame de Sabran, "and be quite sure of not being noticed."

What Madame d'Averne feared to lose was the allowance of three livres a month for her table, and the little occasional perquisites:

"Elle aurait du Régent emporté les serviettes,
Plutôt que de rentrer au logis les mains nettes." *

Her egoism was apparent in her least actions, as in all her more natural remarks. One day, Chirac, the doctor of lugubrious prophecies, said to the Prince:

"Monseigneur, you will die of apoplexy."

"Find me a more pleasant death, if you can."

"Yes; but you will probably die in a woman's arms."

"Better still, my friend."

"Ah! Gracious God! Philippe!" cried Madame d'Averne, "do not give me such a terrible fright; I should be ill for a fortnight afterwards."

This consummate prude had a lover, however, the Marquis d'Alincourt, who recked little of having a rival, so long as his share is not diminished thereby. He is a pretty, curled gentleman; his mirror has taught him too much; he is great at the chase, and the ladies confess it. It is mighty comical to hear him babble, in terms of venery: "I am going to *bag* Madame de Châtillon," said this triple fop; "I shall make something tender out of her." He had a complete rupture with Madame d'Averne, because she did not invite him to a *fête* the Regent was giving in his house

* She would have ta'en his napkins any day,
Rather than empty-handed go away.

at Saint-Cloud. The next day he met her at the ball, and reproached her bitterly in the style of Nimrod.

"I could not," she replied; "Philippe had forbidden me."

"Well, go to your paymaster!" said d'Alincourt, and turned his back on her.

Madame d'Averne, scandalised to the bottom of her soul, hastened to complain to His Highness and her husband. The Regent only laughed, remarking: "After all, he is right." The husband took more offence than anyone; he wished to kill d'Alincourt, for he is Colonel of a regiment of the King, and, if not brave, he wears a sword. This worthy M. d'Averne suffered from epileptic fits, and his anger brought one on, in the middle of the ball; this was sufficiently diverting. When he recovered his senses, he found the Duc d'Orléans discharging the offices of a sister-of-charity to him.

"Monseigneur," said he, *grossomodo*, "permit me to employ my regiment as a guard for my wife, and I swear to you that nobody shall go near her but your Highness."

In revenge, d'Alincourt made a parade of the letters and trinkets he had received from Madame d'Averne, and her fidelity, with which she used to cover herself as with a shield of adamant, received the rudest shock. His Royal Highness scoffed at this virtue, which had both a lover and a *paymaster*.

This list of acknowledged mistresses is, doubtless, incomplete, especially if one were to search for the heroines of a host of gallant adventures which were all alike in their *dénouement*. The reigning dynasty of these ladies is governed by Madame de Falaris, who is more depraved than all others put together. Her husband commenced her education, and others after him have had a hand in it. His Highness always calls her his *tyrant*, in allusion, no doubt, to Phalaris of Syracuse. This lady, if I am to believe those who are in a position to judge, is capable of killing those whom she renders happy. Recently, the Prince was suffering from distressing humours, and Chirac, as the result of a consultation, took Madame de Falaris aside and said to her, with the air of a sibyl:

"Madame, it only rests with you to deprive us of our Regent."

"What? M. Chirac, you are jesting."

"Madame, a man who sees the great and small die daily has no wish to jest."

"But, once more, tell me what must be done?"

"My advice is that it would be best if nothing were done."

The Duc d'Orléans came to put an end to Chirac's confidences.

"My dear doctor," said he, "if I were to believe you, I should neither eat nor drink. . . ."

"It is a question of your life, that is all."

"Better death than . . . besides," he added, turning to me, "I am easy; Stairs predicted, by means of the three glasses of water, that Dubois would die a year before me. Try and postpone the prediction, my dear Dubois."

"Ah, Monseigneur, thank me for having submitted to treatment!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII

DUBOIS' MISTRESS, MADAME DE TENCIN—THE RED HAT AND THE ARCHBISHOP—THE REGENT'S RESISTANCE—LETTER FROM THE KING OF ENGLAND—MAROY'S EXPEDITION—THE ARCHBISHOP'S WIFE—SHE VISITS MADAME—DUBOIS' POLYGAMY—EPIGRAMS AGAINST DUBOIS—HIS ORDINATION—NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RED HAT—THE TWO CONSECRATIONS

THE sorriest of painters will paint the portrait of his mistress; Madame de Tencin, in every respect, merits that I should paint her as she is, and not as she was; for nothing has yet passed away from her. If, instead of having been adorned with a Cardinal's hat, a crown had fallen upon my head, I would offer to share it with her; but in the Church these partitions are not allowed. She is content then, this divine dame, to do the honours of my Archbishopric, which is held in the Palais-Royal.

"My dear colleague," said Massillon, "you are Archbishop through the love of God!"

"And the love of Madame de Tencin. I know that it is mighty ridiculous to be in love at my age, in my state of health and political position; however, I no longer understand by love what I did of old."

Madame de Tencin, who has buried that good Abbé de Louvois, has doubtless been the sustenance of certain honest folk who were capable of supporting the *régime* of a pretty woman. I know not what I am become, but I take myself to task for being jealous of ancient history, for, as for modern, there is no vulnerable place. The conduct of Madame de Tencin is a flint which breaks the teeth of calumny. Methinks that in her eyes there is something of eternal beatitude. These eyes, which have made me commit so many follies, are not those of a Raphael virgin; they have a malice as lively as words; they say all they wish—it is saying much,—and voluptuousness is tempered in them with sense. Her figure is elegant, tall, and, withal, slightly stooping, the result, she says, of her original vocation as a nun, when she was more often than not on her knees; her face is round, with a

little clear-cut nose, cheeks of the deepest crimson, teeth of pearl, in a mouth somewhat largely moulded, but always half opened in an appetising smile. She is reproached with having a neck an ell long, but it is so supple that it is perfectly graceful. I could extend my description from the known to the unknown, but I am too much the Archbishop to reveal what should be hidden, and gauze is a mundane invention not tolerated by the canons of the Church. Richelieu, who is a good judge on such matters, has said, without flattery, that Madame de Tencin has the gift of pleasing four persons, an archbishop, a banker, a duke, and a Prince of the Blood. He did not speak thus without a hidden meaning; but I confused him by replying that of those four persons, the archbishop alone pleased Madame de Tencin. As for qualities of heart and mind, there are none lacking to this lady; she excels in maintaining herself in a becoming position at Court; she asks for nothing, everything is accorded her. She undertook, for instance, to push on her brother in the ecclesiastical career with her secular hands; she has already made of a prior of the Sorbonne an abbé of Vézelay, who is no poorer in spirit than in purse, in the Gospel's despite. This brother is a libertine, capable or guilty of disgraceful acts; and if they would believe me, they would send him to Italy, where he need not be at the pains to amend his ways. Madame de Tencin is much attached to me, and I am no less so to her. I have no doubts as to her disinterestedness, since I had the proof of it, when she rejected Law's millions and was content to make money out of the bank. Some day I will make a will in her favour; for my idiot of a brother would not know how to spend an income of a hundred thousand livres. I have succeeded in making him a director of roads and bridges, even a secretary of the King's cabinet; but he always bewrays the apothecary to such a degree that I despair of washing him any cleaner.

Madame de Tencin, who had at that date, as she has to-day, the management of my household, which was accomplished, if not without economy, yet with dazzling luxury, grieved that I was not a Cardinal, like Richelieu and Mazarin, my models. It was not, however, that I was chary of efforts, money, or presents. Père Lafiteau, whose portrait I have drawn,* in all

* The manuscript contains no mention of Père Lafiteau previous to this passage.

his crusted Jesuitry, was working at the Court of Rome, less in my interests than in his own. He had talked loudly of procuring me the scarlet at small expense, but during the several years he was in the vicinity of the Papal throne he obtained nothing for me but promises. The more impatient Madame de Tencin became to see my head more warmly covered, the more I redoubled my applications, letters, and presents, to win over the Holy Father and the Cardinals. I got the Chevalier de Saint-Georges on my side; he undertook to serve me with all his power, which was but moderate, on condition that I would assist him with money. Cardinal Alberoni, the Pope's nephew, also promised more than he fulfilled, and amid all these guarantees and hopes, I was what might be called bareheaded between two hats. I gave vent to sighs and cries of rage, which ought to have been heard across the mountains, and, in order to move the inflexible Clement XI, I was always casting in his face the bull *Unigenitus*, at which, at heart, I mocked as at Colin-Tampon. Père Lafiteau was the sole ambassador of France at Rome, although Cardinal de la Trémouille, Archbishop of Cambrai, bore the title. This cursed Jesuit gave himself airs of huge importance, and he would have addressed me paternal exhortations for the reform of my manners and my religion, if I had not told him, once for all, to return to Paris, in the event of the hat, which had been given to M. de Mailly, not proving sufficiently elastic to cover the head of the Abbé Dubois. . . . The reply, which I expected to be decisive, was only a makeshift. Lafiteau, making himself as important as an angry cat, and as full of condolences as a funeral oration, had further demands upon my purse for the benefit of the Cardinal nephew, who solicited a present of books, pictures, medals, and antiquities; this devil of a letter was a bill of exchange for twenty thousand livres, payable at sight. I was tempted to wish the hat at the devil, with the Pope's leeches as well; but a postscript, which was but one snare the more, furnished me with the means of barring their retreat. Lafiteau gave me his word, in the name and authority of his Holiness, that the first vacant hat should be mine, provided, he added, with an Ignatian reservation, that by that time I had been nominated bishop or archbishop. "Faith!" I cried, with inspiration, "I will submit to anything they wish, even to a

diocese, in order to attain the red hat." Madame de Tencin, who, after her morning custom, came to hear the news of my health, filled me with a passion for the crozier and mitre.

"I do not consider the revenues of a bishopric," she said, "so much as the honours to which it is the stepping-stone. I vow to you that I would still be a Canoness, if I had any chance of becoming a 'Popess.'"

"Wait for that until I am Pope. But I see an obstacle to these lofty projects."

"What obstacle?"

"My retention of urine and my marriage."

"Heaven is to be arranged with," she quoted.

"Nor is that all—the bishopric?"

"Have one founded in the Mississippi."

"Certainly it would be an ingenious means of excusing myself from residence."

Meanwhile, I was thinking very seriously of making myself an Archbishop, since I could not make myself a Cardinal; Madame de Tencin was the only confidant of a plan which seemed an enormous contradiction to my reputation; I was very careful not to inform Lafiteau, who was delighted, as I had guessed, at having discouraged me. However, I persisted in my attempt to win over the Pope completely to my institution; I repaid him in his own coinage with frivolous promises; at the same time I was preparing the Prince for my unexpected request. I had little doubt but that the demand of a prelacy from me would seem a good joke to him; I remembered that at a supper in the Luxembourg, when his head was clouded with wine, he said to me with an expansive tenderness calculated to inspire me with confidence:

"Dubois, ask me what you like; if it be the half of my fortune, you shall have it."

"Very well, Monseigneur," I answered, "I will answer you as I did Louis XIV; make me a Cardinal."

"Do you mean it, Abbé?"

"Certainly, I mean it; and if you do not mean it, I shall be careful to remind you of it."

"The only red hat you deserve is a jester's cap."

"Monseigneur, do not deprive yourself of yours. I am not so bald but that I can go bare-headed."

On the eve of the 1st of January 1720, I went, according to custom, to offer His Highness my good wishes for the New Year.

"Thanks, Dubois," said the Prince, who was counting out bank-notes; "we are old friends, as I am ready to prove to you in whatever fashion pleases you best."

"In that case, Monseigneur, let your memory make an effort."

"No, Abbé, you must respect yourself if you would be respected; you can never with cope or mitre or red hat destroy the old Adam—that is to say, the Abbé Dubois."

"Ah, Monseigneur, there is somebody, who is not as good as I, who is destroying everybody."

"Are you speaking of Law? He is a brave and honest Scotchman! We shall end by converting him."

"It would cost you no more to make two conversions instead of one. I wish to return to the bosom of religion."

"I only hope religion may return to your bosom! But I do not advise you to change your title of Abbé."

"I shall not do so cheaply."

"Here are some *billets doux* to give you patience until you die."

"Monseigneur, I accept always, ready to give back again."

They were New Year's gifts from the King or Law, a million in shares and bank-notes, and over a hundred thousand livres of ready money with which to win others in the Rue Quincampoix. I asked nothing better for the moment, and if I did not forget the bishopric, I had the appearance of doing so.

On the morning of the 1st of January, while Madame de Tencin was occupied in wishing me a happy year, accompanied by many others, as the song says, a dispatch from Rome was handed me; I abandoned everything to open it, and I leapt with joy, crying: "The Archbishop of Cambrai is dead."

The Bishop of Sisteron brought me this unhopd for news, begging me to propose him as a successor to the Cardinal de la Trémouille. The rogue whom I had picked up when he was a beggar without a sou, had made me fool enough to lend a hand to his advancement; it was high time for me to work for myself.

"What are you going to do?" said Madame de Tencin, who was directress of my conscience.

"Whatever you think right."

"It is no question of that, but of what is the surest and most expeditious plan; go and find the Regent."

"He is engaged."

"In what manner?"

"Ask the lady who is in his company."

"How do you know that?"

"How can it be otherwise on a New Year's day?"

"I see—it is who is to have the gift!"

"Faith! let us arrange that it shall be me."

"You have often told marvels of the good-humoured moments of his Royal Highness."

"To be sure; I know certain persons of your sex who have found them also."

"Well, make haste, insist on entering his bed-chamber, and sell your withdrawal dearly."

This disinterested advice deserved to be followed. Madame de Tencin assisted with her own hands to dress me, not in a grand costume, but in one more decent than that in which I expected to surprise the Prince. I started, bearing with me the letter from Hugues, secretary to the late La Trémouille, and the ardent prayers which Madame de Tencin raised to Heaven for the success of my enterprise. I reached the door of the little gallery, but, like Hercules, I had to kill or drug the dragon of the Hesperides; this dragon had four gaping faces—the valets, who rushed to meet me with the cries of persons indisposed to allow a passage except to force.

"Monseigneur," they said, "His Highness . . ."

"That is all right!" I answered, passing through them.

"The Prince is asleep," they cried, catching hold of my stock.

"Very well, I will wake him up," I persisted, making an effort to enter.

"Monseigneur, he is not asleep."

"Then why all these difficulties?"

"The door is forbidden to everyone, even to Madame d'Orléans."

"That is what we are going to see."

"But . . ."

"What, rascals, you dare to resist me?"

"The order of His Royal Highness. . ."

"Do not look at me ; I will have you dismissed."

"And if we let you pass we shall be dismissed also."

"Do you not know, fellows, that I have the right to see the Duc d'Orléans at all hours?"

"Yes, Monseigneur ; but not when he . . ."

"When he . . ."

"You understand ; he has told us that he would sooner receive a couple of kicks than be disturbed."

"Rogues, I wish to go in, and go in I shall ; it is for you to choose whether you will be dismissed or will share this purse amongst you ; scratch, shout, tear my coat, and you will not prevent me from entering ; you will have done your duty and the purse is yours."

Their silence was a reply ; I threw them the purse, and marched tranquilly to the door, whilst the intelligent servants grimaced in vain to retain me. My coat was in rags, however, and my cheek grazed, and I darted into the room like a flash of lightning. The step was a bold one ; my disgrace might be the price. I perceived at the first glance that I was not expected ; the Regent, however, although red with anger, did not disturb himself, as I feared. "Wretch," he cried, "I will have you hanged or impaled ! Get out, rogue, villain. . . ." And a cataract of abuse struck me in the face, which was skilfully composed into an expression of surprise.

"Will you speak, blockhead," continued the Prince, impatient to see me beat a retreat, "What has made you bold enough to disobey me ? What do you want ? Say it, and begone ; don't compel me to throw you out."

"One word, Monseigneur."

"Two—three words, since you have got here ; but then leave me."

"The Archbishop of Cambrai has just died at Rome, Monseigneur ; I desire to succeed him."

"You, an archbishop !"

"Why not ?"

"Why ? I will tell you, but some other time."

"I must have a promise, Monseigneur."

"A promise ; so be it ! Be off, then !"

"An oath."

"With pleasure ! You are still here."

"Swear to me that I shall be Archbishop of Cambrai."

"Archbishop of H— ! Yes, I swear it ; be off."

"Adieu, Monseigneur ; and thank you."

This promise I had extorted seemed like a dream to the Regent, who got up convinced that I had intended a joke ; he spoke to me of it, in a bantering tone.

"Monsieur the Archbishop," said he, "if I had had a sword or a pistol ready to hand, you would have learned that curiosity is not always a profitable trade."

"I thank you, Monseigneur, for the pledge you have given me."

"I—I have given you anything !"

"I should be ungrateful, indeed, to have forgotten it already ; the Archbishop of Cambrai is your obliged servant."

"Is this no joke ? Is it your intention to insist on the fulfilment of a promise made in the air ?"

"In the air—nay, nay, Monseigneur."

"You wish, my poor Dubois, to succeed Fénélon ?"

"Afar off—by right of conquest."

"Have not people been already sufficiently amused at your expense ? Are you determined to make me the most ridiculous of men ?"

"That is not my business, Monseigneur ; you have made a promise, and I am certain that you will keep it."

"I do not dispute it ; but you will not insist ?"

"On the contrary, I shall yield my advantages to no one : and I would not release you from your word for the Regency of France."

"You, executioner—what will people say ?"

"You know that better than I ; but I have not come to that yet."

"Ask me for anything except an archbishopric."

"Impossible, Monseigneur ; I count upon your inviolate word ; besides, I have a witness."

"If you insist, I must consent ; at anyrate, devise some expedient to relieve me from embarrassment, and see that I am not put to shame."

"I have just got an idea which is as good as another ; I will obtain from the King of England an urgent letter in which you

will be prayed to grant me the archbishopric in return for the services I have rendered in the Treaties of the Triple and Quadruple Alliance."

"The devil! 'Twill provoke a laugh if a Protestant Prince asks for a Catholic Archbishopric for an abbé of your kidney."

"Bah! A letter drawn up by me and signed by the King of England will produce an excellent effect."

"Some day you will have a letter written to me by the Emperor of China asking me to make you Pope. . . . I consent, since it must be so, to make you Archbishop; but who will make you a priest?"

I did not trouble to answer, but went to write the draft of the letter to be written to the Regent by good King George. At the same time, I wrote to Destouches, Stairs, Stanhope, and all those in London who were in a position to oil the wheels. Here is the letter of the King of England, or, rather, my own.

"Monsieur and Well-Beloved Cousin,—I am so satisfied with the services rendered to me, as to yourself, by M. l'Abbé Dubois, at the time of the Triple and Quadruple Alliance, that I should like to give him proofs of my satisfaction and of the esteem I have for his character. I have offered him pensions and presents, which he has nobly refused, in spite of the friendship which exists between us. I am informed from Rome that your well-beloved Cardinal de La Trémouille has died, leaving an archbishopric at your disposal. I know not what your intentions are on this matter; but, as I remember how greatly M. l'Abbé Dubois desired an archbishopric, with your permission I give him my royal voice for that of Cambrai, and it is I whom you will oblige by advancing him to this dignity, which he is worthy of filling in every respect."

This epistle was returned to me without any other addition except the signature of George I, King of England, and the great seal of the kingdom. Armed with this letter, I went to the Regent, this time at no improper hour, and claimed the fulfilment of his promise. He saluted me Archbishop of Cambrai, and asked in my ear what I counted on doing with my wife.

"I shall gain my end by dint of gold and cunning."

"Take care you are not accused as I was on the death of the Princes."

"I defy her to boast that she is my wife."

"It is nothing to boast of."

I begged the Prince to keep my nomination secret until I had seen to everything. I had sufficient confidence in Maroy to entrust him with this very delicate commission. I confessed to him that I was married, and gave him the necessary instructions to obtain the entry of my marriage and destroy it; I told him of the church in Bordeaux, in the registers of which he would find it, leaving the method of abstracting it to his imagination. He set off, and returned at the end of a week, during which the rumour of my nomination had got abroad. I was set at complete tranquillity when he related to me that, having presented himself under my name to obtain a copy of the marriage entry, the sacristan had been unable to find the parish registers of more than forty years back, and had innocently admitted that the old registers were used to light the Curé's fires. He searched himself amongst the fragments, but found not a single page which related to the year of my marriage. My anxiety was alleviated, and I was prepared impudently to deny the sacrament, if not the cohabitation. Moreover, I had an idea that they would be more likely to go to Brives-la-Gaillarde to seek for traces of this marriage, which was beginning to be vaguely suspected. I had no doubt that this was my wife's work; but I was not frightened, as the only reliable proofs were no longer in existence. I awaited my better-half with firmness; she did not fail to come and demand her share in the archbishopric.

I was not surprised to see the appearance, not of a spectre rising from the tomb—would it had been—but of the figure of my old wife, with a radiant and jovial visage; she was known to Manet, who scented something of the truth.

"Hold, gossip!" said I, "when the door of my cabinet was safely closed, you have smelt the fumes of the pot and come to see if it is for you that there is cooking?"

"Of course, my dear husband; it is only just that I should profit by your good luck."

"Stop there, baggage! Do you not want to be consecrated an archbishop at the same time?"

"If that meant 20,000 livres a year, I should say yes."

"Listen, strumpet; you will have to choose between silence and the hospital."

"M. l'Abbé, my turn has come to lay down the law; I am your wife, and I will make it known."

"How will you prove it, fool, and who will believe you?"

"Is not the entry of the marriage registered both in Bordeaux and Paris?"

"Go and look."

"In short, I shall agree to no arrangement unless my annuity is doubled and made revertible to my children."

"You have children, wretched woman?"

"I have four, without counting those I have forgotten, and I put them under your protection."

"Do you think I want to be a father? Once was more than enough?"

"What! You will have no pity for these innocent victims?"

"Innocent yourself!"

"I will bring all the four to your consecration."

"Listen, old raven; I will do what you want for the sake of peace; but I swear to you, by my archbishop's mitre, that I will send you to end your days at the Hospital if I hear any talk of you or your sons of a w——"

Up to the present, Pierrette has been faithful to our compact; the sum I have placed in her name dispenses me from her foolish presence, and I believe she is not responsible for all the disagreeable rumours that have circulated as to my marriage. To believe Saint-Simon, for instance, I had married the eleven thousand virgins. These calumnies were difficult to rebut; I took the wise course of being the first to laugh at them. I suppose, if I am ever made Pope, Madame Dubois will return to exact assistance from me; I dine well enough to be able to throw her a few bones.

Once in possession of the Regent's word, given in earnest, I defied all the pigmies who had sought to bar my way to greatness. The laughter was in secret, and I was overwhelmed with congratulations. I had already been consecrated by the hand of Madame de Tencin. My first visit was to Madame, whom I was delighted to irritate with the spectacle of my fortune; she was conversing with Massillon, who, being rendered pharasaical by his virtuous renown, no longer dared to pronounce my name, and had been mighty careful not to speak to Madame of the Archbishop of Cambrai.

"Well, Massillon, have you told Her Highness nothing?" I asked.

"I!" he cried, amazed at my exordium.

"What, pray?" inquired Madame; "I have this morning received the notes on the week; the news in question should be contained in them."

"No, I think not," I replied; "it has not yet been made public."

"Tell me," interrupted Madame, quickly.

"Monseigneur has just appointed me Archbishop of Cambrai."

"You, my priestling!"

"Would you wish me to remain plain Abbe Dubois all my life?"

"I wish nothing."

"Do you think I am unworthy of the office?"

"I do not think at all."

"Do you disapprove of Monseigneur's choice?"

"No."

"I am happy to have your approval."

"Bah!"

"I was supported by the King of Great Britain."

"Ah!"

I did not persist in having the last word in this Molieresque scene, and was on the point of leaving, Massillon having done nothing else but stare at the Palatine portraits, as though he were looking at them for the first time, when the Regent, who had halted at the door before entering, came in with a laugh.

"Do not come near me, Philippe," cried Madame, "or I will throw my ink-pot in your face."

"Am I not sufficiently diabolic already, that you want to blacken me more?"

"I congratulate you, M. de Cambrai; but since when have you been nominated?"

"Since the 1st of January," I answered, "at eight o'clock in the morning; was it not so, Monseigneur?"

"Yet you promised me, Monsieur," resumed Madame, in a gentler tone, "that the Abbé should never get a bishopric or archbishopric in your lifetime, and that you would be a Cardinal yourself sooner than that he should."

"Tis true, Madame," replied the Prince, with a moved air;

"but I was not in a position to act so, or at least I had good reasons for changing my mind."

"Madame," I went on, "it is the grace of God which has made itself felt within me."

"Would you not have done better, Monsieur," continued Madame, addressing the Prince, "to have given this archbishopric to the poor Abbé de Saint-Albin, who has not been legitimatised?"

"Not much harm done there!" I cried; "that little porpoise will always work out his salvation well enough for the bastard he is."

"Monsieur," said Madame, with a frown, "you could certainly not uphold a thesis in the manner of the Sorbonne; as for his bastardy, it is nobler than yours. It is easy to see, Philippe, that you do not care for that child; yet he is the only one of your bastards who resembles you."

"Almost as much as he does me," I interrupted.

Whereupon I left, enjoying Madame's wrath; but I waited for Massillon, who seemed to have cooled towards me since I had become something more than a Bishop of Clermont in Auvergne.

"Massillon," said I, "you know me better than anyone; it is to you I apply for my certificate of morality."

Massillon seemed as though turned to stone; he answered by a sign of the cross, as though he were defending himself against the wiles of the Tempter.

I walked majestically through the gallery, where the new archbishop was supplying material for all the envy and slander of those present. My entry effected a diversion in my favour, and flatterers came to kiss my claws. Arouet, the serpent of the Palais-Royal, came forward insidiously mouthing out a compliment couched in a sarcasm.

"Monseigneur," he said to me, with genuflexions:

"Les prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense." *

"What do you mean by that, Monsieur, you speaker in enigmas?"

"Ah, Monseigneur, my meaning is excellent; one has to be no fool to become an archbishop."

* Priests are not what vain people deem them,

"Nevertheless, you will hardly become one, Monsieur, I suppose."

"No, Monseigneur," he cried, with a sort of enthusiasm, "but I will found a religion."

"What religion, please?"

"The simplest and most natural possible."

"Beware Master Luther! The fires are not so utterly out that they cannot be rekindled!"

The courtiers by whom I was surrounded suddenly interrupted our duel of tongues.

"Monseigneur," said Madame de Tencin, with the voice of a newly-wedded wife, "pray show us the beautiful letter written to you, by His Britannic Majesty."

"Yes, yes," repeated several voices, "your episcopal brevet delivered by a Protestant."

I made a feint of not hearing, and unfolded my letter, which was passed from hand to hand; I spread myself out, deeming myself already equipped in rochet and camail.

"Good God!" said Nocé, with a prolonged burst of laughter. "What is this design traced on the letter?"

"'Tis a fish!" remarked Arouet, maliciously.

"They are speaking arms," added Richelieu.

In fact, there was a fish drawn in pencil just over my name in the address. I have always suspected Nocé of this ill-natured jest, with which his Royal Highness was regaled, when he arrived, smiling at a paper opened in the shape of a letter.

"Guess, gentlemen, what has been written to me," said he, after listening to the story of the fish.

"They write, Monseigneur, to tell you that La Fillon has been made a Canoness," answered Richelieu.

"What a horror!" said Madame de Tencin.

"They send you the birth certificate of the Archbishop of Cambrai," said Nocé.

"No; more likely a certificate of his good conduct."

The outburst of laughter gave me breathing time; I fixed my eyes on the Regent, who made a sign to me not to be afraid.

"Gentlemen," said this good Prince, "unworthy rumours have circulated, tending to show that Dubois is married."

"Married!" cried all the ladies in alarm.

"But I have examined into the source of the calumnies, and

I find no less than six marriages which are said to have been formally contracted; here is an anonymous letter which informs me that poor Dubois is the lawful husband of Mademoiselle Populus, daughter of a chasuble-maker of the Pont de Notre-Dame, who was married a second time to a certain Gochereau of Toulouse."

"Cauchereau of the Opera, no doubt," said Broglie, scratching his ear.

"I am of opinion," said Nocé, "that the chasuble-maker would be quite the thing for an archbishop."

"Gentlemen," resumed the Duc d'Orléans, "I have made inquiries as to Dame Populus and her husband Gochereau; they are known neither in Paris nor Toulouse; it is an infamous lie. They write to me from Orléans that a former wife of the Abbé Dubois, named Mademoiselle Leger, married again to the Sieur Collasse, claims her rights from the Archbishop of Cambrai; it is useless to tell you that this calumny is utterly devoid of proof."

"Monseigneur," I interrupted, "they may have forgotten a tenth lady, whom I will therefore indicate to you."

"Again," resumed the Regent, "there are certificates from curés or abbés, which would prove that Dubois is lawfully married to Mademoiselle Letellier."

"She is a friend of mine," cried Richelieu; "she is everybody's wife; it is her mania."

"To La Fouine," continued His Highness.

"I have seen her," said Nocé; "she is as like the Abbé as if she had been his brother."

"To La Jumeau!" concluded the Prince.

"She is as well known at the Palais-Royal as her green petticoat," replied Broglie.

"Is that all?" I asked, without losing countenance.

"One might find a few others," said the Regent, again turning his gaze on the assembly; "but, as a *dénouement* for you, I reserve this letter written by M. Salentin, Minister of the King of Prussia; read yourself your own fate, Abbé."

I began to think it was no longer question of a jest, and I read in a voice that had little assurance, this dispatch, which bore no name or address: "A woman of very mean extraction, a native of the county of Hainault, reduced to the utmost poverty, has just declared that she is the wife of the Abbé Dubois, and has

had several children by him. As a very little more generosity on the part of that minister would have shut the poor creature's mouth, it is not easy to see what he has done to lose the little judgment he has, even to the degree of not foreseeing the prostitution that this discovery will bring down on him. Moreover, many persons accuse him of habits so infamous that it is doing him too much honour to attribute a taste for women to him. The accident which has befallen him shows us that he is a man ready for anything, and that no sin would embarrass him."

"Is Dubois Blue-Beard then?" cried Nocé.

"I am not surprised," said Law, "that M. l'Abbé needs so much money for his household."

"A moment, gentlemen, that is not all," I said, "another half-dozen women have come to me by the post."

"It is enough," interrupted His Highness with firmness; "can you not see that all these marriages prove that none exists. I will seek for the authors of these subterranean calumnies, these treacherous letters, and I will give them an exemplary punishment. Dubois is Archbishop of Cambrai; respect him in view of his title, if not of his person."

"Droop your head, haughty Sicambre," said I to Richelieu.

"Finally," said the good Prince, "since I have deemed Dubois worthy of the honour which I have done him, to offend him would be an offence against myself."

"Monseigneur," retorted the incorrigible Arouet, "you are weaker than Jesus Christ, who refused to turn stones into bread."

"M. de Voltaire," said I to the author of *Oedipus*, "I will repeat to you the words of the Tempter: 'If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you whatever you want.'"

"I only ask for absolution, Monseigneur."

He bowed to me profoundly, and I gave him a gentle blow, with the formula: *Confirmabo te*. The Regent took me aside, and asked me what I thought of his expedient for silencing the reports as to my marriage. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart, and informed him of the result of Maroy's journey. The tale delighted him, and he commanded me to prepare for the consecration, which would take place as soon as I was ordained priest. "However," he added, "I shall not be able to be present."

"Would you blush at the work of your hands?" I asked.

"No; but I have promised Madame not to go."

"In that case, Monseigneur, you can consecrate whom you will; I shall not lend my countenance to it."

"Good! You are brazen enough for that."

I was going away in a deep gloom, when I met Madame de Parabère and the Duc de Mazarin, who stopped me with the following remarks:

"Is it true, Abbé, that you are going to be baptised?"

"Nay, Monseigneur is going to make his first communion."

"Those are two witticisms, Madame," I answered, "which are likely to be repeated."

"Amen!" said the Duc, abandoning the field to me.

"Madame," I resumed, "are you in a position to render me a small service?"

"A great one, if you wish, my dear Abbé."

"As everything has its price, I will promise you two hundred thousand livres in shares."

"That is better than in words; I accept, without knowing what is required."

"To contrive that His Highness shall be present at my consecration."

"The thing is all the more easy as I shall consecrate my night to it."

"You know then, fair lady, some means of obtaining everything from Philippe."

"By refusing him nothing."

I looked upon my cause as gained, now that it was in the hands of so seductive an advocate.

The Cardinal de Noailles had thought to embarrass me greatly by demanding a certificate of good conduct, and the proof that I was a priest. I hastened to satisfy him, in order to impose silence on the envious and my enemies. The report of my nomination was spreading amongst the public; everyone was commenting on it, and the satirists had already resorted to their pens. I gave a sum of money to Fontenelle, that he might undertake the task of putting a stop to epigrams and couplets. He even had the cunning to extract receipts in which these frogs of Parnassus submitted to be gagged in consideration of one or two hundred livres. A threat of the Bastille

was at the back of this money payment. At the same time I wrote to ask for the Pope's induction, a cardinal's hat, and to inform my creature, the Bishop of Sisteron, that, through my influence, he had been nominated the King's *chargé des affaires* at the Court of Rome. Lafiteau went into mourning over his archbishopric, and, seeing that his fortune was at stake, was not slow in sending me a definite promise of the hat; for which, none the less, I had to wait until the following year. All this time I was the butt of all the jesters, who broke their lances against my archiepiscopal mitre. I never forgave Nocé for having made a comedy out of an epigram.

On the eve of my ordination, La Fillon, who was as free of the public and private entrances of the Palais-Royal as any Princess of the Blood, presented herself in deep mourning at the Regent's audience before my arrival; all the *roués* clustered round her, as though they had not been informed in advance of the part she was to play.

"Ah! ah!" said they, "Monseigneur, La Fillon is doing penance."

"Better late than never," said the Prince.

"Yes, Monseigneur, there is a time for everything," said La Fillon.

"Well! Have you brought us any fresh fruit?"

"Is not my conversion one?"

"Fillon," said Nocé, "you deserve the discipline."

"We will enrol her amongst the Flagellants," said Broglie.

"No, gentlemen," she answered; "I have renounced worldly vanities, and wish to take advantage of His Royal Highness's bounties."

"What bounties?" asked the Regent.

"I beg you, Monseigneur, since you are so generous to people of my profession, to grant me an Abbey."

"It is only right," said all the hare-brained youths; "Dubois has already got a fat bishopric."

"Do you dare to compare yourself with Dubois?" asked the Regent.

"God forbid! Monseigneur!" said La Fillon; "I take it I far surpass him in the management of young ladies."

"We will all give her a certificate of morality and good conduct," said Nocé.

I arrived at this juncture, much preoccupied with the ceremonies of the morrow, and although the laughter redoubled at sight of me, I did not recognise La Fillon in her lugubrious garments.

"Monseigneur," said Richelieu, with a grave air, "here is one of your Eminence's wives."

I advanced, trembling in every limb, and La Fillon turning towards me, I recognised the impudent face of the procuress.

"*Vade retro; Satanas, exorciso te?*" I cried.

"Do you know what La Fillon wants, Abbé?" said the Prince.

"For herself?" quoth I.

"Naturally," retorted Nocé, "the good wife still has pretensions."

"She must be married to the Abbé," remarked Broglie.

"Whatever you do with her, we shall not be cousins," I said angrily.

"Dubois," continued the Regent, "I make you judge in this matter. Fillon is soliciting an abbey."

"Send her back to her convent," I cried; "my crozier, if you please, I will show her the way of salvation."

I showed her at the same time the way to the door; she dropped a profound curtsy, and left more quickly than she had come. "Abbé," cried the Prince, "ask her if she wishes to join the Carmelites as a novice." I was consoled for this farce when I heard officially that the Parabère had kept her promise and that His Highness would be present at the ceremony of my consecration. I fell like a bomb upon my friend Massillon, who having been admonished by the Cardinal de Noailles and a score of aspirants to the episcopacy, was keeping his bed and complaining of the gout in his hands, which prevented him writing what I wished.

"None the less," said I, as a preliminary; "if both your hands had been amputated I would not excuse you from writing my certificate."

"I care too much for truth to conceal from you the fact that I am greatly embarrassed. . . ."

"Why, pray? It seems to me that the Cardinals de Richelieu and Mazarin offer examples and analogies. . . ."

"If you insist on it, I will give you the certificate, but at some other time."

"When I have no further need of it?"

"Then, rather than offend you, compose it to suit yourself, and I will sign it."

"It would be fine, indeed, were the Abbé Dubois to become the unworthy secretary of the eloquent Massillon; besides, I should be afraid of burning too much incense in my own honour."

"What do you want me to say?"

"How do I know? Have you not a stock of fine phrases, a preacher like yourself, a member of the French Academy!"

"If it is absolutely necessary . . . but what sin there may be in it must be put to your account."

"Twice over, if that is all your objection."

"Dear God! What a part I am playing!"

"A fine part—sponsor of such a man as Dubois!"

He raised himself to a sitting position, with the air of an *Iphigenia in Aulis*, took the pen in his trembling hand, wrote, erased, sighed, fair-copied, and eventually handed me a certificate in due form, in which he did homage to the purity of my morals, my charity, my good resolutions, my theological learning.

"My worthy friend!" I cried, "this is devotion; I could not have done it better."

"May Heaven forgive me the sinfulness of it, if there be any."

"You are astonished; you will be much more so when I am made a Cardinal!"

"You!"

"Before the end of the year."

"My dear Dubois, I am beginning to renounce the vanities of this world; I shall go and bury myself in my diocese, and consecrate the remainder of my life to the Good Shepherd's flock."

"As for me, I shall make my residence at Court, and if anyone casts a doubt on the purity of my morals, my charity, my good intentions, my theological learning, I will flourish your certificate."

"Give it back to me, I implore you."

"With pleasure—after my consecration, with two other Episcopal signatures."

"That will reconcile me with my conscience."

"Adieu, my dear *little Lent*, I have to go and be made . . ."

"A priest!"

"My little Bishop of Nantes has received my orders; he will now give me those of the Church."

I left Massillon, and his remorse, to think once more over his sermon *On the smallness of the number of the Elect*, and went to make all my arrangements for being ordained priest. I did not think it so difficult to give an *order*. I was afraid lest the ceremony should be disturbed by La Fillon and the *roués*, if they came to know where it would take place. M. de Tressan even warned me of a plot of the Cardinal de Noailles to prevent me from becoming a light of the Church; there was a question of employing an armed force and of having recourse to secular justice. I had nothing to fear except scandal, and this I was determined to avoid. The good Bishop of Nantes smoothed away all difficulties, and, being convinced that there was no means of repudiating a sacrament, I let myself glide, resolved to pay no heed to the subsequent reproaches of Janus-Noailles.

According to Tressan's instructions, on the 23rd of February I sent for Bastide, successor to Chef, my first major-domo. "A cook such as you," said I, "is aware that tongue is not always a good thing; I beg you only to use yours in moderation. Here are eight hundred livres in this bag; employ them for the necessary expenses. Proceed to the Chapelle des Quinze-Vingts, you will notice a man standing by the holy-water stoup on the left; you will make a sign to him, and he will follow you; you will go to the Carrousel, where you will find a carriage with four horses, containing two persons, who will expect you; you will take your place in it, and only at the barrier will open this packet which will give you instructions as to your destination." The man of the holy-water stoup was M. de Tressan's almoner; the two persons in the carriage, his *valets-de-chambre*, and the sealed packet contained a letter to the Curé of a village the other side of Poissy. Bastide gave evidence of much intelligence in his mission; he handed the letter to the Curé, who, after reading it, bade him return to Poissy and make preparations for a grand supper in the best hostelry. The Bishop of Nantes and I arrived the same evening in a carriage drawn by six horses. As we had a laborious day before us, we supped and went straight to bed. I will confess that I did not sleep that night, and had waking dreams; methought I saw the room full of Cardinals in their robes of State. Early in the morning, M. de Nantes came stealthily to see me; we left by a small door, and, crossing the country-side, reached the village presbytery, where the good Curé

gave us a more glorious reception than if it had been at the French Academy. My nephew, the Canon of Saint-Honoré,* had sent secretly the necessary ornaments that I had requested. It was a tedious task to spend a whole day in religion, in a cold, damp church, and that on an almost empty stomach. My bowels cried for mercy, my nerves were shaken, whilst I received, as it had been a two hundred pound weight, the sub-diaconate, the diaconate, and the priesthood. The Bishop of Nantes had more endurance than I. "A little suffering," said he, "must be put up with for the sake of an archbishopric." My frame of mind was one of such irritation that I looked rather like one possessed than a candidate for ordination; I knocked against a bench as I was saying my first mass, and, in my pain, I flung out an oath which I was quick to cloak in a *Dominus Vobiscum*. The Bishop of Nantes held his sides for laughing. My experience over, I obtained a brevet of priesthood from the peasant-curé, who thanked me, with tears in his eyes, for my gift of ten thousand livres. The knock I had given myself made me limp like a cripple.

"Where do you come from, Monseigneur?" asked Bastide, when I had returned to the inn.

"I have just fractured my leg," I answered, with a grimace.

"How you must have sworn!"

"Not as much as I should have liked, I swear."

I returned the same evening to the Palais-Royal, hugely delighted at being able to say Mass. The rascal, Bastide, made me pay dearly for this pleasure; my eight hundred livres melted in his hands, and more besides.

The Cardinal de Noailles gnashed his teeth when he found I was a priest in spite of him and in my own despite. My certificate gave the last touch to his mental confusion.

"He is not a man—this Abbé Dubois," said he.

"Ask Madame de Tencin," retorted Richelieu.

Meanwhile, I was putting off my consecration, being ashamed that I was not yet a cardinal. Lafiteau was incessantly raising my hopes, and I was compelled to purchase the promise of a hat for

* Earlier in these memoirs, Dubois says that this Canon did not long survive; presumably, he obtained for the latter's brother the succession to this Canonry. It is certain, at anyrate, that a nephew of the Cardinal, a Canon of Saint-Honoré, was one of his heirs.

more than three hundred thousand livres, which the Regent granted to the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, who only aspired to the throne of England for the honour of the Roman Church. This poor fool of a Stuart refuses to believe that he debars himself from his sovereignty for ever by entitling himself King by grace of the Pope; none the less, he did his best to provide a covering for my head, for he was in mighty need of money. Meantime, the hat did not come. I was tempted to throw it to the winds. I wrote frantically to my Jesuit to shower reproaches on him; and, as his reply was not forthcoming, resigned myself to be consecrated merely as an archbishop. It was now the month of June, and people had had ample leisure to accustom themselves to my new figure; the laugh was exhausted, the jests were worn out, and even the suppressed indignation of the clergy appeased as though by enchantment. I fixed a day for my consecration, therefore, and on the 6th of June went to take my oath to the King.

"Dubois," said the Regent, "beware lest I make you keep your vow with the same punctuality that I observed in discharging mine."

"Monseigneur, I consent to anything, except to residence."

"Keep the Palais-Royal then for your diocese, and may the Palais-Royal keep you."

"May God have me in his keeping!" I retorted, with a sneeze.

His Majesty considered me in my new garb; my eyes met his, and I was hardly edified to see him laughing in my face.

"Monsieur," I said to the Abbé de Fleury, "inform His Majesty that there are some bishops whom I should not take for beadles."

"M. Dubois," said the young King, "your perruque is put on awry."

I was done to death with staring during this interview, in which my tortures were exaggerated by the trouble with my urine; I made gestures and grimaces, which gave me the appearance of a devil being sprinkled with holy water.

"Pray, what is the matter with the Abbé?" asked the King; "one would suppose he had an uneasy conscience."

"It is not his conscience, Sire," answered the Duc d'Orléans, without any further explanation.

To obviate the inconveniences of a four hours' ceremony, I had a mechanical, portable urinal made by Truchet, of the Academy of Sciences, who was known as the Père Sébastien.

"Monseigneur," said he, "I am the very man you need; it was I who superintended the fountains at Versailles."

"A moment, please! This is not a question of fountains."

"You can depend upon my skill; I am learned in hydraulics and mechanics."

"Above all, be careful that there be no accident."

"Enough, Monsieur; you will be as satisfied as you were with the fountains at Versailles."

I was distrustful of those fountains, and it was not without a sentiment of alarm that I ventured on his machine, which consisted of a sponge shut up in a tin vessel; I was tempted to believe, after the event, that it was a Jesuitical trick.

The great day arrived; the church of Val-de-Grâce had been magnificently decorated; an amphitheatre had been erected in the nave; tapestry, garlands of flowers, operatic decorations,—nothing had been spared. All my household had been put into new liveries; Maroy, in a satin suit, was one of the masters of ceremonies. As for me, I was so gay, that I sang the psalms and responses; I rehearsed my part under my breath, practised the bestowal of blessings. Madame de Tencin acted as my *valet-de-chambre*, and the good lady was puffed out with pride at the sight of my violet cassock and the rochet of lace and ermine. Whilst my toilette was proceeding, the window was open, and a sempstress at a neighbouring house mistook my benedictions for amorous signals. In becoming an archbishop one does not cease to be a man. Forceville, in dressing my perruque, contrived to cover my face with flour; the rascal did it expressly to try me, but I ran after him, and to bestow kicks on a lackey is not a mortal sin. It was a fine ceremony; I could have wished to be at once actor and spectator. The Duc d'Orléans appeared with his son, the Duc de Chartres, in a tribune in the choir. Madame de Tencin, as richly adorned as any archbishop, was placed opposite me through the gallantry of the Bishop of Nantes. The Cardinal de Rohan officiated pontifically, assisted by M. de Tréssan, who displayed his beautiful hands to the ladies, and by Massillon, who was doing penance for his certificate. The church was crowded with prelates,

princes, gentlemen, ladies, and guards. One saw nothing but diamonds, stuffs of gold, and silver brocade. I was not vain enough to believe that it was to do honour to me, that they assisted at my consecration; but to the Regent, on whose protection I depended. I saw many smiles on many faces, but I redoubled my majestic attitude, making my crozier heard, and flashing my ring, made of a single diamond, a present from His Royal Highness. The Prince did not lose one of my movements, which did not lack in clumsiness, in such fashion that I went to the right when I should have gone to the left, and threw the ceremony into confusion, meaning no harm.

All went well until the litanies, when I had to kneel down and remain in front of the altar. The order for this dangerous position had to be repeated twice, for my urinal was not only inconvenient but very clumsily devised. I swore against Père Sebastien under my breath, until my anger found vent at the same time as something else. "D—d Père Sebastien!" I cried, and escaped into the sacristy. This sudden flight caused a commotion which only subsided on my reappearance. The officiating bishops were stupefied at the energetic litany I had uttered, and which even scandalised myself; Massillon believed that, like Balthazar, I had seen a hand writing on the wall in characters of fire. The ceremony proceeded in a decent manner. I was exultant, and sang the *Magnificat* in honour of His Royal Highness *qui exultavit humiles*. That sorry jester, Richelieu, came to me when I was sitting on my pontifical chair: "Abbé," said he, "see what you gain by being an Archbishop; you are no longer Secretary of State."

The traitor glided away, after poisoning my joy. I had all the more cause to believe what he told me, as more than one person had threatened me with residence. A gloom came over my face and I turned towards the Regent tearful eyes, which begged for mercy. I hastened to join the Duc d'Orléans before he left for Saint-Cloud, as had been arranged, in order that I should have the complete disposal of the Palais-Royal.

"Monseigneur!" said I, in piteous tones, "is it true that you refuse my services?"

"Who has told Your Eminence that?"

"Richelieu came and growled the news in my ears; it has made me curse my ecclesiastical ambition."

"To be sure, I might submit to the fact of God sharing you with me; but I am not jealous of my rights."

"So I am to remain your most devoted Secretary of State?"

"Ah! you remind me that I have filled up your place!"

"By my crozier!"

"You see, I only learned this morning what I had done."

"Monseigneur, do not joke like this, or I shall go, in my grief, and hang myself in my Cathedral of Cambrai."

"To speak frankly, Dubois, I am not going, out of sheer gaiety, to deprive myself of an old friend of my childhood."

"You are right, Monseigneur; and if I die before you, as has been predicted, you will regret me more than once."

"The English gazettes do not agree with you."

"I can forgive them, for I occupy Fénelon's place."

The Regent showed me sundry passages in the London gazettes, which announced my retirement from the post of Secretary of State. This was a piece of treachery on the part of the Comte de Sennectère or my enemies in France. My heart was sore at this cowardly attack, and before dinner I had dictated letters to Lavergne which still bewrayed the Secretary of State. This scurvy report from London haunted me all through the meal, and my ill-humour was apparent through my politeness. I was satisfied as archbishop, displeased as a minister, and, had my crozier been in my hands, I could have struck out vigorously with it.

The banquet was superb; the two chief tables had been laid in the Regent's state apartment. The diplomatic corps, the Court, the magistracy, and the prelacy, furnished guests, whose appetites were hearty. Eighty guards, with an officer at their head, as on parade, were the plate-bearers; pages and *valets-de-chambre* attended to the service. Friends and enemies were at the board of the true Amphitryon; Villeroi, Tallard, and Berwick had attached themselves to my bench, the armorial bearings on which were croziers. The Cardinals de Rohan and de Bissy had the places of honour, since it was an ecclesiastical *fête*. Everybody of distinction was invited to the Palais-Royal. The priests, curates, and vicars who had consecrated me, found a well-furnished table at Val-de-Grâce, to regale them after their labours. A gloom was cast over the banquet at the Palais-Royal by my discontented countenance,

which even the agreeable conversation of Fontenelle could not brighten. My idiot of a brother, who had enthroned himself brutally in a place of honour, from time to time flung out silly remarks, the weight of which crushed me. I hope God will take account, with a view to indulgences, of all that I suffered during that eternal dinner. Happily, His Royal Highness had desired to pay all the expenses. It cost more than thirty thousand livres, what with the broken china. Who would be an archbishop after that!

They wished to heap ridicule upon me which I did not accept; they called me the Archbishop of——well, I dare not say what. Letters, epigrams, fish, gooseberries, a thousand ribaldries of the market came to me. I did not bow my head, and to turn scarlet I waited until I should be a cardinal. In order to defend myself against all this mockery, I prepared, for the month of January of the following year, a batch of bishops and archbishops; this gave rise to a saying that it rained mitres and croziers. I had the opportunity of paying back one of her sarcasms to Madame.

"To whom shall we give the Bishopric of Charenton?" I said.

"Monsieur," she replied, "to the man who made you an Archbishop."

Madame de Tencin is mighty fortunate to have a friend who has an absolution always ready in either hand.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE MISSISSIPPI COMPANY—A PROCLAMATION—ADVENTURE OF M. AND MADAME QUONIAM—OVATION TO LAW—HIS MISTRESSES—LAW'S COACHMAN—*LAPSUS LINGUAE*—BRUTALITY OF THE PRINCE DE CONTI—FALL OF THE SYSTEM—THE BANK ANNULLED—EDICTS AND DECREES—THREATS OF A SAINT BARTHOLOMEW—TROUBLES IN PARIS—THE PEOPLE AT THE PALAIS-ROYAL—LEBLANC'S PRESENCE OF MIND—LAW SAVED—MADAME MISTAKEN FOR LAW—LAW'S PARLIAMENT—HIS RETREAT SIX LEAGUES FROM PARIS—APOPLEXY OF THE REGENT—FLIGHT OF LAW

THE Company of the Occident was prospering, although in the Colony of the Mississippi the one thing lacking was colonists. However, numerous persons were being embarked, who died on the way or only arrived to find themselves without resources. But the journey was long, and the cries of these unfortunates could not reach across the seas to disenchant the Mississippians, as the shareholders, in the number of whom I had the honour of being, without their risks—were called, Law having given me, *pro Deo*, the paper, which everybody else bought for ready money. Meanwhile, as I have said, the fairy tales composed by Lamothe and Fontenelle, and proclaimed in public places by criers, secured innumerable dupes. Here is one of these advertisements which cast gold dust in the eyes of the foolish. Fontenelle, who gave it me, would have me believe that it was written by Lamothe; it seemed to me mighty diverting, especially when I imagined it delivered from the hustings by criers dressed as savages, to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums. There was one at the entrance to the Rue Quincampoix, whom people went to hear out of curiosity; he was both author and reciter, his harangues were more naïve than those of the academicians.

"Inhabitants of Paris, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, this is what His Majesty, the King of France, Navarre, and the Mississippi, has had the advantage of communicating to me, in

order that I may communicate it to you in my turn. 'Tis neither the plague, nor the itch, nor any other disease; on the contrary, it concerns a cure for the disease of being in want of money. All of ye, noble or base-born (for I do not pretend to favour anyone, and I address myself to married women as much as to the rest; in especial to all honest folk, who have no work, trade, or shelter, but who have their pride), all of you then are invited to make, for your pleasure, the voyage to the Mississippi, and to return richer than princes, with two thousand or a hundred thousand livres a year as you fancy. Be it understood that I have thanked His Majesty in your name, for he is interested in you all, even in babes at the breast. You are not only Frenchmen, you are Mississippians, and in a year and forty days there will be no one but millionaires in His Majesty's dominions, which will be of the utmost advantage to commerce and dealers in paper. Meantime, then, the King of France and I have certain propositions to make you, which you will accept with gratitude. M. Law, who possesses kingdoms in the new world larger than France and richer than Peru, is in need of willing subjects. Let those of every age, of every rank, who are willing to embark on the vessels, be assured they will become dukes, princes, and even emperors, once established in that land of Cocaigne which is called Louisiana, because *louis d'or* grow there like mushrooms. The Mississippi, of which I am charged to do the honours, is the property of M. Law, who, as you know, has riches enough in his coffers to buy the slipper of the Pope. It is a fair province, where wheat grows of itself, where the streets are paved with pure gold, where the buttons of your coats are diamonds, where the poor have palaces and four servants at least, where bread only costs two sous the pound, and elephants are used instead of horses, where men live to be a hundred years, ladies and gentlemen, and where each year of them is worth more than two, than three, than twenty of ours. Brandy is given there for nothing; for wine, no one can object to it; I hear it from your rogues of Surène, for they drink wine there which has not its fellow. In this delicious country, where the larks, so to speak, fall ready roasted in your mouths, all the inhabitants are young, noble, and rich. You have heard of the gold mines of South America, but they are nothing besides these of the Mississippi; everyone is free to exploit them. You may go out into the fields in the morning, past the barrier,

dig down to a depth of two feet, and there is gold enough to fill your hat. Is it silver you want? you dig a hole in another place; is it precious stones? you have but to pick up the pebbles by the river-side. We have upon our list twenty dukes and peers, and fifty ambassadors of Spain who have offered us their services and their persons. We are equally at the orders of the public, and we will admit into this earthly paradise generally, all persons who desire to make their fortunes. It is enough for you to inscribe yourselves and set off in the government carriage. There are already five hundred million citizens, artisans, soldiers, and great signiors who have engaged their places; that tells you that not many are left. Hasten, therefore, to take them. I promise, during the voyage, to each Mississippian a ration of bread and meat, and as much wine and brandy as he wishes; only those who are sick will drink water. Moreover, anyone who is not satisfied at sea will be immediately sent back to France, there to repent him at his leisure. I have forgotten to tell you that all the native women are beautiful; nevertheless, to create competition, we also undertake to transport, safe and sound, any ladies who want a carriage and lackeys. These ladies will be warmed, nourished, and amused at the government expense."

These emphatic absurdities dazzled the mob, and there was a rush to be inscribed. In this matter the good city of Paris, which was crammed with public wenches of no education, thieves and vagabonds, was purged. But as those who were enrolled were shut up until their departure for a sea-port, a great number regretted the liberty they had sacrificed to specious lies. Vessels loaded with men, women, and merchandise were dispatched to Louisiana; but when all the scum of the town and the suburbs had been voluntarily transported, there was no one left to send, and the criers, who were paid so much a head for colonists, remedied the famine by intolerable acts of violence. There were many abductions, which had the appearance of being permitted by the ministry, and which could not be quite put down. I know of merchants who lost their wives and daughters; of others, who sold them as so much cattle; I myself seized this opportunity of sending to the Mississippi certain rogues, both male and female, who did nothing but ill: better far away than at home. I could have devoutly wished that my beloved wife would adopt this course, but she refused every offer I made her, in order to be

rid of her once for all; I went so far as to propose to her a sum capable of buying the most incorruptible conscience. She answered me, with reason, that at such a distance, the pension I made her might be interrupted by some accident. Finally, she took root in Paris, hard by the Palais-Royal, for fear I should fly away. I was no more fortunate with a baggage who had played me a trick of her trade, and who deserved to be whipped; but, just as she was on the point of starting to the devil or the Mississippi, that other devil d'Argenson saw her, found her attractive, and had her treated in order that he might love her in safety. It was a scurvy action on his part, but his only reward was that it cut a few years off his life.

At this period,* the adventure of Quoniam, the cook-shop-keeper, made more noise than the spits of all the roasters together would have made, turning in music round the fire. Quoniam had a wife, whose ways were so caressing that the whole host of gallants came to "roast" their love in her shop. I think it was Richelieu who discovered her behind a rampart of roasts. Two words from Richelieu went straight to the mark; he sent openly to this fair one a score of young sparks, who did but become moderately enamoured. The husband saw nothing but his fowls, heard nothing but the sound of his spits. One night, however, the perfidious "roastress," seeing her husband asleep by the fireside, let a satin-coated gallant into her room. At the noise that was made inside, the husband thinking that Madame Quoniam had gone to bed, shut his door to go and do likewise, then entered quite maritally into his domestic sanctuary, where he did not think to find a Trojan appearing quite at his ease. The first idea of poor Quoniam was to run to the window, crying out "thieves," "murder," although no one was being murdered: far from it. The Mississippi scouts were passing at the time; they decided that the capture of the delinquent would be rendering him and the judges a service. They surrounded the house, in such a way that the courtier saw no possible way of flight.

"Do as I do," said the cook-shop-keeper's wife, "call 'thieves.'"

The cries were redoubled, but did not impose silence on the husband who, going to open the door to these men, whom he believed to be the watch, was the first to be arrested. His wife

* Probably 1718.

ran down in her shift; the gallant followed her in the same breezy attire.

"Gentlemen," she said, pointing to her lover, "I thank you for the timely succour you bring us; a moment later and this villain," she went on, designating her husband, "would, perhaps, have killed us. Look at the great knife hanging from his belt."

"What, Madame Quoniam . . ." said the astonished tradesman, clasping his hands.

"Do not let him go, gentlemen," repeated this worthy wife, "I dare not suspect this night-bird of any other intentions; if you had not arrived so seasonably, my husband would have put him on the fire."

Indeed, the gallant had, at random, seized hold of a basting ladle. M. Quoniam was so confused at this scene that he stood stock still with gaping mouth. They dragged him out of his stupor to convey him to the house of detention, where the Mississippi colonists were confined. He could hear, whilst in the hands of the scouts, the peals of laughter with which the good wife hailed his departure; but it was in vain that he entreated these kidnappers; they would not or feigned not to believe him; moreover, they had discovered from certain signs that the pretended husband was a man of mark, and they preferred to keep the real one, who was transported from the Place du Châtelet to the Mississippi. The heroic Madame Quoniam was celebrated in a score of songs, which gave her more vogue than ever. I have related this unimportant episode, because my enemies have attributed the blame of it to me, adding that the kidnappers, incited by my tonsure and gilded words, had consented to the jest, but I have not this poor husband's fate on my conscience. Ravannes, who was not then a Councillor of State, may have made the *coup*; but he did not boast of it, because the Regent said that the author of this wicked action deserved to take the husband's place. Massillon, confessor of the Quoniam, has refused to enlighten me on the point. If it was His Royal Highness himself!

Meanwhile, the System prospered; Law was swollen with pride; he was richer than all France, since he was exchanging against paper all the minted money he could unearth; a million cost him no more than a few strokes of the pen. He had acquired immense possessions, town and country houses; he would have

bought Versailles if he had been allowed. He was greater than the Regent, greater than the King; he was talked of as the eighth or ninth wonder of the world; his valets, his lackeys, his very scullions, held their heads high when they passed a duke and peer. All this luxury and stir, projects and paper, was no more than a soap bubble. I suspect Law of having appreciated the worth of his system better than anybody; since no one will ever know how much specie he sent out of France. I made this reproach to him, and he answered me, laughing, that there was overmuch money in the State, and he would not be satisfied until iron and copper were more valuable than gold.

"Evil genius," said I, "you are the opposite of King Midas, who changed everything he touched into gold."

However, matters bore still so encouraging an appearance, that I had not the courage to push him to extremes, the less so, in that he was giving me shares with an admirable disinterestedness. As I risked nothing, I gambled with good fortune, and in spite of all the edicts, amassed as much coined money as I could. I proved to be more prudent than the ant of the fable.

It was in the Rue Quincampoix that the wheel of the blind goddess Fortune was incessantly turning; it seemed to me that that long, narrow, muddy street must have been chosen expressly to render it more unapproachable. This was the scene of all the vast traffic in shares, whose value rose or fell according to the caprice of the brokers. There were falls and admirable rises, because Law had ever in hand a short decree of the King creating new shares or depreciating the coinage. Ah! if it had only been known then that instead of twelve hundred million shares, Law had put nearly three milliards in circulation! One trembles at the thought, and, assuredly, no other prince than the Duc d'Orléans could have drawn us from the abyss, into which, to tell the truth, he himself had dragged us. There was such a prodigious obstruction in the Rue Quincampoix, that the people who dwelt there, could neither get in nor out of it; many speculators passed the night there in order to be first at the sale of the shares. It was necessary to place French guards on each side of the street to maintain order; but this good intention on the part of the police only succeeded in causing several people to be crushed under the horses' feet. In vain did great nobles, and

even princes and princesses, try to enter this fortunate street in their carriages; they were forced to alight and use their feet like any simple speculator; the Dowager Princesse de Conti ordered her coachman, to no purpose, to drive the wheels over anyone who should not give way to let her pass; her equipage was damaged by the people, and her horses crushed. She was afraid of meeting herself with ill-treatment, and cried out that she was the Princesse de Conti. "If you were the Princess of Mississippi, you should not advance an inch; be off, unless you prefer to wait for your turn."

It is related that a little hunchback earned more than fifty thousand livres, by lending his back, as a sort of writing-desk to those who were taking shares. I am astonished he did not make more; for all those who had been enriched, thought nothing of money,—they were all for paper; in a few months considerable fortunes were made, and it seemed, for a moment, as though there would be left no other *noblesse* save that of the bank. Profits were counted by millions, and the small shopkeeper changed his shop for an Hôtel, his counter for a carriage with armorial bearings.

This was the case of the ungrateful Maroy, whom I had brought up, whom I had formed with loving care, whom I supported and always paid in his quality of courier. He left me, just after I was installed as Archbishop of Cambrai. I had half dismissed him, I admit, but I bore him no malice. The cunning rascal, who had a face and shoulders worthy of a Countess, courted some of my conquests; and I made a pretence of not noticing it, for I am not jealous of every woman; but I suspected this menial, I know not why, of envying me Madame de Tencin. He was always trying to divert my suspicions to the Regent, or again, to Law, who, said he, knew what value to attach to the fidelity of my mistress; this was only a snare to conceal the truth from me. Tencin, yielding to my pressing solicitations, confessed to me that Maroy had attempted her, and advised me to get rid of him. I wished to surprise the traitor in the act, and make him unfit for service, in whatever sense you understand the word; but two days after my consecration, at which I had no cause to complain of him, he arrived in an equipage which caused a great stir at the Palais-Royal; he was so splendidly attired, that I should not have known him, if he had not addressed me in deliberate tones.

"Monseigneur," said he, "I am a better courier than you think; I have run after Fortune and caught her."

"Rascal," I said, "pray, is not the fortune you speak of some good woman who has paid you more than you are worth?"

"Understand it as you like, Monseigneur; but I have played in the bank; I have won some hundred thousand livres, and, as I am not ambitious, I have deserted your livery, and am going to live from henceforth on my revenues."

"Be off with you, coxcomb that you are, and, above all, be careful not to come sniffing too near my soup, or you will get some sharp raps with the spoon."

We separated on friendly terms, and Maroy—become M. de Maroy—cuts a certain figure amongst beauties past their prime. Venomous tongues have sought to make me believe that my courier's Fortune was none other than Madame de Tencin; but I repelled these calumnies, which no doubt spring from some discarded suitor. Moreover, I have often held up Maroy's example to Manet and Forceville, saying: "You sluggards, you have two hands and ten fingers, but you will never make your fortune."

"By the Mardick canal!" answered Manet, "that pretty fellow, Maroy, has more than his ten fingers to help him on in the world."

The System had turned all heads of the young Court; the elder Court disgorged with groaning to see all its money transformed into curl-papers. The Regent, recking nought, had made Law his treasurer, and he was satisfied, so long as he had Pactolus to draw from. All his worthless mistresses had bird-lime on their fingers. Amongst the heaviest gamblers the Prince de Conti must be mentioned, the hero of the Rue Quincampoix, as witness this epigram composed after his return from Spain:

"Prince, dites nous vos exploits :
Que faites-vous pour votre gloire ?
—Taisez vous, sots, lisez l'histoire
De la Rue Quincampoix."*

* Prince, your exploits we would know :
What do you do for your glory ?
—Peace, fools, and read the story
Of the Rue Quincampoix.

In truth, after having been through a campaign, he returned with dysentery for all his laurels, and hastened to signal his valour in the field of speculation. His cousin, the Duc de Bourbon, was also one of the faithful of the Rue Quincampoix, and, Prince of the Blood though he was, he did not disdain to employ miserable ruses in order to obtain a few millions. 'Tis true that Madame de Prie did not let them lie idle. Madame would have greatly liked to play; I even think she had a player in her name. Her son, who had more hands than two, when giving was in question, commenced by increasing her pension by a hundred thousand livres; he then made her a present of two millions in shares, saying: "Here is something, Madame, to pay for the paper you use for your correspondence." Madame played them and lost them, but pretended she had distributed them amongst her household, so that people were asking one another if they had seen the colour of this money. D'Antin speculated fiercely up to the end of the System; he had attached himself to Law, whose greatness was intensified by rubbing up against great nobles. The latter then had for mistress Madame the Dowager-Duchess, who wore down her teeth rather than the wealth of the Controller-General, at which the honest woman nibbled night and day. Lassay, who was the lover in fashion, obtained so many millions that they rendered him ridiculous. I believe that the Dowager, in recognition of his good and loyal services, kept him previously informed of the fluctuations of the shares, which she obtained in her private interviews with Law.

Law, like the grand Signior he was, did not compromise himself with the Princes of the Blood and the speculators, in the tumult of the Rue Quincampoix.

"Fie!" he would say, "if they were to see me appear at the Bank, they would think I was going to take shares for myself; I should look like a *parvenu*."

However, he wished to know how things were passing in the Rue Quincampoix, and his court racked its brains to find some means of saving him from the crush. All were unanimous in declaring that to so great a man incognito was impossible. At last, they advised him, if he desired to be carried in triumph, to leave his carriage at the entrance to the street, and proceed to the Bank on foot. If this had been done, the extravagance of the Mississippians would have known no bounds. A person of the

society, who owned a house in the adjoining street, from the windows of which one had a view of the whole of the Rue Quincampoix, hastened to offer it to *Prince Papius*, surnamed *Pile o' Money*, as he had been designated in a pamphlet. This was the only visit Law paid to the Bank. He was accompanied by his titled adorers. The Dowager-Duchess, who was loved by Law, because he could say: "My mistress is a daughter of Louis XIV," was more dazzling than the shrine of Sainte-Geneviève. D'Antin marched in front, with a thousand attentions and gallant utterances, which won him the most gracious smiles. The proprietor of the house had decorated it with paintings, devices, and flowers. All contingencies had been foreseen, for if a triple file of guards had not been commanded to await the carriage, the people would have crushed him to prove their respect and gratitude. Law had hardly appeared at the window with his gentlemen, before he was recognised by the speculators of the Rue Quincampoix. At once there was no more thought in the street of the Bank, every eye as well as every voice was directed to the side on which Law was to be seen in person. It was one universal, repeated cry of, "Long live M. Law, benefactor and saviour of France." The people crowded up to the window, and Law, noticing there were some poor people shouting louder than the millionaires, threw handfuls of gold into the street, which completed the confusion, and caused a bloody affray. Law laughed at the sight of a battle over a few louis. When he returned to his carriage, an old woman succeeded in pushing through the soldiers and, falling on her knees, kissed the lap of his coat.

"Come, mother," said Law, with a smile, "don't tear my coat to make relics"; and he snatched a diamond from the dress of his dowager and put it in the old woman's hands.

It was an infinite honour to be admitted to Law's presence, and I knew many great ladies who would have done anything for a moment's speech with him. He had more than twenty coats torn, so many were the hands thrust forward to stay him! Madame de Bouchu, to mention one amongst a thousand, was never tired of gazing upon Law's Scotch features. One day, when he was passing through the courtyard of the Palais-Royal, she ordered her lackeys to carry her in their arms, so that she might at least see his hat. On another occasion, knowing that

Law would dine with Madame de Simiane, whose lover he was, she went and implored that lady, whom she knew, to invite her to dinner.

"To-morrow, if you like," answered the latter; "to-day M. Law is dining with me, and I should displease him were I to receive some person he did not expect."

"Very well, my dear," she said, "allow me to put on the clothes of some lackey or kitchen scullion."

"Can you think of it, Madame? You would turn both of us into a laughing-stock."

"No matter! Madame, your excuse is uncivil, and I shall remember it to my dying day; but you may do what you like, you will not have M. Law to yourself."

Madame de Bouchu withdrew with a sore heart. At the dinner hour, she drove in her carriage past Madame de Simiane's house, and, at her orders, her lackeys and coachman started a cry of "Fire!" Everybody came out, or rushed to the windows. Law, who feared for his skin, ran to the door; but seeing Madame de Bouchu leap from her carriage and extend her arms to him, he suspected the ruse, returned precipitately and closed the door behind him. Madame de Bouchu was singularly set upon seeing Law; I know not if this was due to her admiration or to interested motives. She was reduced to the device of having a carriage accident in front of Law's Hôtel, when he happened to be at the window; she said to her coachman: "Upset it, rascal, upset it!" When the "rascal" had obeyed, at the risk of broken bones, she gave vent to such piercing shrieks, that Law ran to the assistance of the fair lady, who pretended to be wounded, but, none the less, ran lightly up the staircase to the banker's apartment. She was, indeed, wounded both in heart and purse; at last she obtained what she wanted from Law.

Law was so incessantly besieged, that he was absolutely forced to attend to certain calls of nature in presence of ladies, who softly purred to him: "Don't stand on ceremony, M. Law; do it all for the love of us." These ladies were, for the most part, duchesses who were deserting the Court. When Mademoiselle de Valois had to set off for Modena, search was made for some great lady to be her escort; but the Regent saw nobody to whom he could confide his daughter. "You must have a duchess," I said to him; "send to Law, they are all assembled there." A

cit's wife, by dint of influence, was granted an audience by Law. The first thing she saw was the Duchesse de Gèvres, kissing the hand which had built up the Bank. "I shall go," she said, as Rabelais once said to the Pope, "for if duchesses kiss his hand, I have no idea where I may be forced to kiss him." Even his son was an object of idolatry. The little urchin was already as proud as his father and mother; he treated ladies as his slaves, and the honour of his birth was loudly sounded by them. They vied with one another in "my lording" this sprig of Scotland. He was to have danced in the King's ballet, in the comedy of *L'Inconnu*, but he fell sick of the small-pox. In short, I believe the most virtuous women would have refused nothing to Law; I except only Madame de Tencin.

In spite of my sinister forebodings, there were some astounding fortunes made. I am aware that Fontenelle was the author of the adventure of the lackey who, having bought a carriage out of his profits from the Bank, mounted behind it, as though he would not get out of practice. But Law related to me the story of his coachman, which is no less marvellous; this worthy fellow, having won considerable sums, asked to be allowed to retire.

"Are you so rich then?" asked Law. "But if you will stay in my service, I will quadruple your wages."

"I will give you my answer in the morning, for to-day I am staking my all."

"So be it! But, in any case, I beg you to choose your substitute."

On the morrow, the coachman arrived, dressed like some great noble; he was followed by two coachmen in livery.

"Monseigneur," he said to Law, "here are two servants whom I present to you as conductors of your carriage."

"But I only require one."

"Of course; the other I shall engage myself."

This coachman, in the fifth or sixth generation, will receive letters of nobility from some genealogist, and his descendants will be as highly esteemed as those of Madame de Schomberg's groom.

My *valet-de-chambre*, Manet, seeing a lady, magnificently attired and blazing with diamonds, step out of a carriage, shook his head, and said: "There goes a princess who has tumbled into that carriage out of her garret window." I repeated this

witticism so often, that I have won as much reputation for it, as though it had come from Fontenelle. Madame Bezon much diverted me with the story of her cook. She was at the Opera with her daughter, when a big vinous-hued woman, covered with gold and silver, entered a box. At the strident trooper's voice of the woman, Mademoiselle Bezon looked round, and said, with an exclamation of surprise:

"Why! It is Marie, our cook."

"Hold your tongue, daughter," said the mother, "would you get us insulted?"

The spectators in the amphitheatre had overheard this colloquy, and began to whisper round her: "Marie, the cook!" The jests followed fast, and to put an end to them the bejewelled lady rose with an air of great deliberation, and addressing Madame Bezon: "I do not deny," said she, "that I was a cook, and skilled in my profession; now I am a millionaire; I have made money in the Rue Quincampoix, and I like to spend it; I buy fine dresses and I pay for them; you could not say as much, Madame Bezon! you still owe me the balance of my wages." Madame Bezon was so confused at this harangue that she left the theatre, whilst the cook minced and strutted before the eyes of the audience. This is the same cook who came to Law, and, meaning to say to him, "Make me a concession," said, "Make me a *conception*."

"You ask me for the impossible," answered Law; "I have been doing nothing else since I came to Paris; but now, I have not the means."

I had foreseen that it would not be long before the edifice of the Bank tottered to the ground. D'Argenson, whom Law had offended, by refusing shares to his lady-superior, was secretly undermining the System in the opinion of the Regent and the public. This devil of a d'Argenson was implacable when hatred actuated him; he finally won over the Prince de Conti to his side; he had lost a million in consequence of some deception of Law's. The latter avenged himself for an insult offered to his English wife. The Prince de Conti, who has fits of mad brutality, one night, at the Opera Ball, caught hold of a masked woman, whom he ruthlessly ill-treated, tearing at her eyes, pinching her arms, and giving her cuffs and blows. The poor victim submitted, until Law passed by and interrupted the Prince's uproarious laughter, by delivering the woman out of his hands.

"Wretch," said Law, "you deserve to have your nose and ears cut off."

"Do you know who I am?" asked the Prince.

"No," answered Law; "your ignoble conduct has made me forget."

"You are bound to respect me."

"I will respect you, when you are made Regent."

It soon transpired that the mask, who had been victimised, was Madame Law. Everyone, even the Regent, approved of the banker's vigorous resistance. The latter, however, went through a form of reconciliation with the Prince, who is the sort of man to bear malice until the day of judgment. To which is due, no doubt, the fall of the System.

During the period of the Mississippi madness, Law turned Catholic to humour the young King. His Majesty said to him: "M. Law, it would be a great satisfaction to me to see you confess and communicate." Law made no answer. His Majesty returned to the charge, and said to the little Law: "If your father would change his religion, I would create him duke and peer." The child repeated this promise to the ambitious Law. D'Argenson shrieked from the house-tops that it was shameful for a Controller-General to be a Protestant, as though the management of the State finances was such an eminently Catholic operation.

Madame de Tencin said to me one day: "M. Law consents to abjure."

"And why, pray?"

"Because he is converted."

"Who has worked this miracle?"

"I . . . No, my brother, the Abbé."

"The conversion will bring him in, besides indulgences, priestly dues in coin or paper."

I was not mistaken; the Abbé de Tencin had received the price of his exhortations in bank-notes and shares. Madame Law, who had a spiteful suspicion that Madame de Tencin had more share than the Abbé in the work of abjuration, would have no part in it; she cast stones at her husband, and was very nearly going back to England. I advised the Regent to storm the offended wife's virtue. I do not know whether he came out of this with honour. The abjuration was to have taken place in

Paris, with solemn pomp; but it became known that it was intended to trouble the ceremony with masquerades and mockery. It was important that a serious character should be given to this act of policy; the abjuration took place at Melun, therefore, and Law submitted to receive baptism with a good grace.

"Now that you belong to our Communion," said Madame de Tencin to him, "you can be saved. . . ."

"What is the good of saving myself!" he interrupted; "I am satisfied with having saved France."

His Majesty was enchanted with this conversion, which he piously ascribed to the grace of God. But a brevet of Catholicism could not stay the downfall of the System. The Maréchal de Villars, in disgust at the losses he had sustained, was the first to maintain that this miscreant had issued more than eight milliards in paper. A week before the catastrophe, Law bought an estate from the Président Novion at a price of five hundred thousand livres, which the financier paid in cash, with these superb words: "I thank you for having disembarrassed me of this inconvenient metal." On the following day, the Président's son contested this sale, and returned him the amount in paper, which Law was forced to accept. Nothing, however, transpired as to the state of affairs, and few speculators were aware of the enormous sums which had left the kingdom. The Regent, who watched the flow of Pactolus through his house, let himself be dazzled. On the day before the edict of reduction, he asked the astute Cardinal de Noailles roundly what he thought of the System.

"It is an enchantment," answered the worthy Archbishop, who was equally of the opinion of everyone else.

"The devil! An enchantment!" cried His Highness. "Do not exorcise it with a sign of the cross."

It is believed that the Prince de Conti, and, perhaps a few others, got wind, through the channel of the Dowager-Duchess, of what was mooted, although Law's brow had never been more unclouded. At an early hour of the morning, he drew out of the Bank, in exchange for his paper, four or five waggon loads of money, which created a fearful void in the coffers. A Dutchman named Varnesobré sent at the same time to cash bills to the amount of thirty millions. This was bound to accelerate the discomfiture. Next appeared the edict diminishing the value

of the shares by one half. It came as a thunderbolt to speculation. It was Law's turn to suffer depreciation. Cries of indignation arose on all sides, and the proclamation which restored gold and silver specie to circulation enlightened the blind. The most profound poverty, famine, pestilence, every possible disaster, threatened or fell upon France. Law, however, did not lose countenance. The Regent, who had gorged him with privileges, those of the former company of the Indies, of the coining of money, the farming of tobacco, seemed to awake from a slumber which had lasted far too long. Law did not appease the people by resigning his post of Controller-General. They knew he was still at the head of the failing System. He made prodigious efforts of imagination to revive it, but the value of his paper steadily declined. The Rue Quincampoix was deserted; it was nothing but reproaches and despair. The shares were reduced from four to two thousand. An attempt was made to extinguish the bank-notes with fresh liens upon the town. Notes were re-issued which nobody would have, and which had no further currency, in spite of the edicts. No private individual was allowed to have more than five hundred livres in coin in his house; money was re-established; but paper could not recover the confidence which specie had regained. The Parliament, always ready to mount the high horse, refused to register certain declarations. I was not the only one who was delighted to humiliate it. I have described in detail in my political memoirs the loyal and zealous manner in which I served, not Law, but the Regent, the State, and my private enmities. I will not repeat it here. It is my opinion that the Parliament is an evil tree, which can only bring forth evil fruit; it must be cut down and thrown into the fire. The red-robcs were exiled, therefore, to Pontoise. Why was it not to the other end of the world? At Pontoise, business languished, then was completely interrupted; for the bar had not thought fit to follow the Parliament into exile; the Parliament consoled itself with *fêtes* and pleasures, high play, and intriguing at every pretext. D'Argenson had done well to listen to the advice of his superior, and deliver up the seals to the Solitary of Frênes, who opposed his excellent reputation to the rage of the people. D'Argenson, had he remained Chancellor, would have been stoned in his lifetime, as he was after his death. Bread was so dear, that poor wretches who had

died of hunger were picked up in the streets; bands of the destitute formed ragged cohorts round the carriage of the Princes; the Duc d'Orléans, being importuned by these beggars, threw them a handful of bank-notes, which were scattered like the oracles of the Sybil, but those who picked them up, tore them to pieces with horrible imprecations against Law and the speculators. This was not all; the plague, which was ravaging Marseilles, was making further progress, and at any moment might be expected in Paris.

Meanwhile, at the Palais-Royal, everything gave the lie to this universal wretchedness; the Regent, who held the mob in horror, refrained from nothing which might make him incur further odium. The Prince de Conti, since the carrying off of the waggons loaded with bullion, which had brought about the downfall of the System, was the hero of the market-women; like Monseigneur, son of Louis XIV, he paraded Paris in an open carriage, escorted by cries, cheers, and ignoble faces; he threw money broadcast, and the populace flung itself upon this money as though it had not come from the infamous Bank. This popularity, premeditated and purchased by lavish expense, would have alarmed anyone except the "Debonnaire."

Meanwhile, the edicts multiplied, contradicted, supported each other, and repeated themselves; it was all in vain. The start had been made, and Law's System, according to Madame's energetic expression, was converted into curl-papers. It was in vain that Law spent his gains in fresh baits, no attention was paid to them, and the title of "execrable" was in every mouth in conjunction with his name. There was universal despair, and the ruined shareholders took the side of the humble folk. Civil war was at the gates of Paris; from house to house incendiary missives circulated, which redoubled the apprehension. I received more than one of these warnings, couched in these terms: "Notice is given you that there will be another Saint-Bartholomew, on Saturday or Sunday, if there is no change in the situation; do not go abroad nor let your servants out: God preserve you from fire." The Palais-Royal was infested day and night by a swarm of malcontents. The people's conduct in these circumstances reminded me of the death of the Princes, and assuredly the Duc d'Orléans was in greater peril at this time. Every day Law heard cries beneath his window: "Papirius the Scot to the gallows!" The

Parliament was still in Paris, and I have no doubt but that these cries, proclamations, and circulars, were its work; it had no love for Law, did not conceal it, and had more than once wished to arrest him. M. de Mesme said, in his red robes, that he should like to re-dye his costume in the blood of the Scot. The more grave a character this frenzy assumed, the less appearance there was of attempting a remedy. The mistresses, the ordinary advisers of His Royal Highness, begged him to put himself out of the reach of these madmen, either at Fontainebleau or Versailles. The Regent asked me for my opinion.

"Monseigneur," I said, "in your place I should send for the cannon from the Arsenal, and two hundred musketeers would sweep the streets of this scum of the populace; do you not see that they are in somebody's pay?"

"And, for my part, I neither can nor will pay them in balls and bullets; I will wait to defend myself until they attack me."

"At least have your guards doubled."

What alarmed me even more were the fresh rumours seminated against the King's health. "The Regent," they declared, "has sent him poison in fruits, and even in books, but the Maréchal de Villeroi has frustrated the peril by his caution." It was also said that the Regent had put into the King's hand a pinch of the same snuff which had been the death of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The more malicious and incredible the stories, the more acceptance they met with everywhere, the more they were repeated; and everyone was singing the *Domine salvum*.

The most alarming outbreak was that of the 17th of June, in consequence of the suppression of the edict of the shares. On the previous day, the crowd was so large in front of Law's Hôtel, that three men had been suffocated. Troops were sent to restore order and protect the banker's life. The death of these three men was attributed to the intervention of the French guards, who had not even drawn their swords. The ringleaders proposed to go in a body and demand justice from the Regent for the three victims. This determination was come to during the night, and towards daybreak, the multitude formed in a profound silence and made its way to the Palais-Royal, the gates of which it forced open. The people precipitated themselves into the courtyards tumultuously; I was still asleep; the noise made by this numerous deputation awoke me with a start; I ran to the

window, and the sight which met my eyes had the same effect on me as some terrible nightmare. One looked out upon a stormy sea of men's and women's heads; there were no arms beyond a few pikes; three naked corpses borne on a sort of litter. The terror in the ante-chambers and apartments was at its height. His Royal Highness, who was informed of the tumult, refused to rise, asserting that he needed sleep, and would not sleep less soundly for it. Moreover, in case of necessity, Leblanc or I were to be roused. I swore all my biggest oaths at such culpable indifference, and, uncertain whether to adopt a bold or prudent course, sent M. de Simiane to warn Leblanc and Madame, who had gone to the Carmelites for her devotions. Leblanc, who knew how to impress people with his firmness and severe air, was not long in coming. His arrival did not even excite a murmur; he was not afraid to trust himself in the thick of this rabble, which might have torn him to pieces; he went right up to the bodies of the men who had been crushed, and ordered them to be removed. This order did not meet with the least resistance. Leblanc harangued the multitude, which maintained its sinister aspect, and for all answer demanded that Law should be hanged. But as some of them complained of famine, Leblanc sent musketeers to pillage a neighbouring baker's, and the cellars of the Palais-Royal. The sight of bread and wine-casks produced a certain lull; there was a rush to secure portions of the banquet so graciously offered by Leblanc. After these occurrences, Law, who had been for some days annoyed in his Hôtel, where he was besieged by a host of enemies, thought he would be in safety at the Palais-Royal, and, as soon as the crowd had dissipated, leaving him free to execute his project, he had his horses harnessed, got into his carriage, and exhorted his coachman to accelerate rather than retard the pace. The carriage was recognised by some passers-by, who shouted: "Law to the gallows! Down with the Rue Quincampoix!" But these hostile intentions were confined to words. The coachman, obeying Law's orders, got so deeply extricated amongst the rioters that he could neither retreat nor advance. A cry of "Death to Law!" which found an echo in every mouth, attracted Leblanc to the scene of an imminent conflict between the banker's lackeys and the mob. "Gentlemen," he cried, in a firm voice, "this carriage is not M. Law's, but the Cardinal de Noailles'; I beg you to let

it pass." This lie in season saved the unhappy banker's life; he lay back, trembling in every limb, in his carriage, which was prudently closed. The coachman whipped on his horses so promptly, that the people, half-convinced, opened a path for it. Leblanc, with admirable courage, walked by the door. At last, Law leapt from his carriage, and, accompanied by his saviour, took refuge in the Palais-Royal. The people were able to discover the trick, as Law, even after his abjuration, had but little resemblance to an archbishop of Paris. Leblanc's perfidy might have proved disastrous to him, if he had not disappeared with Law. The cries and howls were resumed with redoubled fury, and the coachman found himself surrounded by threats and cudgels. The lackeys had slunk off before it came to blows. "'Sdeath!" cried the coachman, "if there is only one brave man amongst you who will try his fists against mine, I will show him that M. Law's men do not attack a single man a hundred strong." This provocation was greeted with hoots, and the brave coachman was hurled from his box, trampled under foot, and stupefied with blows. At the same time, the rage of all was turned upon the innocent carriage, which was broken into a thousand pieces, as though it had been glass. Law looked on at this scene, with the expression of a man who could have wished himself farther.

Madame arrived in her carriage, and she, too, was very nearly mistaken for Law; they were already throwing stones at the doors, and her livery was liberally insulted. Madame, who was in the company of Madame de Chateautiers, thrust her head out, and the sight of a Princess of the Blood stopped acts of violence, and reduced even the most rebellious to a respectful silence.

"My friends," she said, to those who were within earshot of her, "what do you wish? I will beg my son to refuse you nothing."

"We wish Law to be hanged!" howled the multitude, which was reinforced every moment by all the scum of Paris.

"Oh! oh!" they cried, as Madame passed along, "the Regent is a good fellow, but he has bad ministers." It is possible that she invented this compliment, good lady, to see me contort my face. Madame was in terror lest they should burn His Royal Highness in the Palais-Royal, as they had

threatened in anonymous letters. The Regent rose at last, and when his mother said to him:

"Take care, Monsieur; yesterday I received a warning that an infernal machine would be thrown, which would not leave one stone upon another of the building in which you stand."

"Bah!" he cried, with a laugh, "I see they would be mighty pleased to frighten me, but I am no more afraid of the Persian poison with which they would lure me, than of the five hundred bottles of poisoned wine which I am alleged to keep in my cellar."

"Do not jest, Monseigneur," I said, in my turn, "it would only need some bold rascal to put himself at the head of these maniacs, and the Palais-Royal would become a second Troy."

"It is the Parliament which suborns all these conspirators," added Law, as white as a sheet, straining his ears.

"I am astonished," continued Madame, "that there is still so much ill-feeling amongst the people, now that the Maintenon is dead and buried; it is true, those dear du Maines are still with us."

"What pleasure can they find in making those hideous yells?" interrupted the Regent; "I have a good mind to go and ask them what they want myself."

"Do nothing of the kind, Monseigneur," said Leblanc; "the people is a sea which ebbs and flows like the sea; it would be hardly wise to seek to stop it when it is withdrawing of its own accord."

"True," I cried; "the Rue Saint-Honoré is full of retreating forms; these stone walls are much more likely to wear out these *frondeurs* than human faces; they will grow tired of mounting sentinels at your doors, and depart before they are asked."

I had foreseen the result. M. de Chiverny, tutor to the Duc de Chartres, returned from Saint-Cloud in a chair, in ignorance of the siege that the Palais-Royal was undergoing. He asked what was the matter; he was told that all this tumult was only to get Law hanged as high as Haman. None the less, he ordered his bearers to advance in spite of the crowd, and to enter the Palais-Royal, where he had business. One of the bearers accidentally jostled some little vagabond who, to avenge himself, shouted out: "Here is Law!" He was believed, improbable as it was that the Scot once in safety in the Palais-

Royal should have again exposed himself to real danger. The chair was surrounded, the bearers beaten, and the cries "To the gallows! To La Grève!" resounded with increased fury. Chiverny himself opened the door, and at the sight of this little wizened old man, more hideous in his own person than a hundred more bulky monstrosities, the people's terrible frenzy was changed into hilarity.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for having taken me for M. Law; but although, hitherto, I could have wished to resemble him in fortune, I now perceive that it is better to remain as I am, poor, old, and ugly."

"By the Host!" said one of the ringleaders, "this is one of the seven wise men of Greece!"

"No, my friends," replied Chiverny; "I am only the Duc de Chartres' tutor."

"In that case," retorted sundry voices, "undertake the father's education as well as the son's."

When they had laughed their fill at the new *Æsop*, they put him back in his chair, and let him enter the Palace.

This diverting episode relaxed the animosity which had resisted the bread and wine of M. Leblanc. The crowd gradually diminished, then entirely dispersed. Sinister-looking men hung about the courtyards until the evening; but they were so closely watched that they dared not make any attempt during the night. Leblanc organised watches in the Palais-Royal, which was put in a state of siege. The Duc d'Orléans suggested to Law that he should take refuge at Saint-Cloud; but Law, more disturbed by such a perilous day than by the loss of his bank-notes, preferred to remain under the wing of His Royal Highness. On the morrow, a free distribution of bread prevented a renewal of the scenes of the 17th.

The Parliament, which has two hundred hands with which to work evil, and not one to hold the scales of justice, was still recalcitrant, the Areopagus of Greece. It bluntly refused the edict, without a why or wherefore. I took a fair sheet of paper, drew up a fine *lettre-de-cachet*, and took it to the Regent, who signed it without reading it, then to the King and ministers, and the Parliament was transferred to Pontoise, with its sublime first President. If the Regent had had faith in my advice, he would not have recalled My Lord Parliament, especially with

the honours of war, in such wise that these gentry were able to reimburse themselves in money for the value of their notes. The parliamentary effervescence only lasted a few months, and I congratulated myself on having thrown a certain amount of cold water on these big-wigs. But the du Maines and the Prince de Conti had excited the movement amongst the people; it was the tail-end of the Cellamare conspiracy.

A company of the foot-guards was stationed at the entrance to the Palace to prevent the Parliament from assembling, and see to the execution of the *lettre-de-cachet*. This company was relieved by a regiment of musketeers, which, in order to pass the time, took it into its head to *play at Parliament*. They disguised themselves, put on robes and wigs, some as presidents, some as councillors, notaries, and advocates. They pleaded, argued, declaimed, gave judgment, and when the merriment grew more animate as the burlesque proceeded, these gentlemen's lunch arrived—to wit, a pasty and a sausage; this was the signal for the end of the trial; after a deliberation, the pasty was condemned to be broken, and the sausage to the fire until death should ensue.

Law lost his head at this time; it was his only good possession. He still hankered after the chimera of the System, and, like the dog who drops his bone for a shadow, he kept on advancing and then retracing his steps; he fell deeper and deeper into the mire. Bank-notes and shares were as decried as they had once been sought after; the Rue Quincampoix was a murderous alley. It is true that clever people like myself were able to obtain money for their paper, but unluckily there was only money enough for the first comers; the rest had to put up with nothing. An edict was issued allowing foreigners to bring as much property and gold and silver specie into France as should seem good to them; nothing came. No one risked what he had saved from the shipwreck of our finances. The Regent appreciated the discredit into which the Bank had fallen when, being desirous of buying a necklace worth a thousand louis for a casual mistress, he was obliged to give notes for ten thousand, and the jeweller still had the worst of the bargain. Bread grew no cheaper; the plague was imminent; and the people persisted in its desire to see Law hanged.

Chiverny was not the only one who came near paying for

his sins; Boursel, who has the misfortune to resemble Law, as much in face as in his semi-English mode of dressing, when returning in his carriage from the convent of the Grands-Jésuites, was blocked by a hackney-coach which became involved with the wheels of his carriage. Boursel's lackey descended, and found a big blustering coachman who declined to extricate his carriage unless he was paid for the damage. The lackey was just coming to blows with this lout when Boursel, cane in hand, leapt from his carriage and would have been slaughtered at the combatants; but, immediately the coachman, either from spite or conviction, started shouting at the top of his voice: "Help, help! Law is trying to kill me." The populace soon flocked up, men and women, armed with stones, staves, and brooms. Boursel saw plainly that all explanation would be vain, and escaped into the Church of the Jesuits, with the riotous mob still at his heels; and he would have been slaughtered at the foot of the altar, if the open door of the sacristy had not offered him an escape from certain death. Whilst beadles and sacristans were parleying, he had time to scale three walls, and to hide himself until nightfall under some straw in a stable.

The fury was not appeased by the suppression, first of the large and then of the smaller bank-notes. The ruin of the System was complete. Law skulked in the Palais-Royal; his wife and children remained at Saint-Maur, with the Duc de Bourbon, who made enemies of all the enemies of Law, on account of this hospitality. The Duc d'Orléans, yielding not so much to fear as to the pressing solicitations of his friends, retired for a brief period to the Tuileries; but he was not sufficiently fond of children to accustom himself to the infantile and capricious manners of His Majesty. He returned to his own house, in spite of all that could be said to deter him. Assuredly, Law owed his life to me; for I was the cause, through my nomination to the Archbishopric of Cambrai, my consecration, and the jests to which it gave rise—it was, I say, partly for that that people were less concerned with him, and, consequently, with his hanging, which was the constant aim of all the riots of that tumultuous year. When they began to write songs and epigrams against Law, I was reassured about his safety, for in France we do not seek the death of those we satirise.

The Prince de Conti, by separating himself from Law and the

Regent, had passed over to the enemy, which encouraged him to seek popularity. Madame du Maine continued to hold her *levées* for the purpose of plots, intrigues, and epigrams. The poets of the place, Grécourt, Vergier, Chaulieu, and, perhaps, Fontenelle, composed against Law the "*grande Façon de Barbari*," which made the round of France. I shall not quote it, although Maurepas has given me a more complete copy of it, from the hand of Malézieux, the scribe of the ink-slingers. I, too, let them sing on! but they shall pay me for it.

Law fought against wind and tide, and all the couplets in the world would not have made him budge, for he was meditating a revival of the System, modified by what experience had taught him; but the Regent, who found himself more than seven millions in debt, had cooled down remarkably towards the Bank and the Mississippi. On the other side, d'Argenson, in the seclusion of his convent, still stood between Law and His Royal Highness, who, like the Heavens, needed the shoulders of Atlas. The King, who had never liked the banker, whom his tutor Fleury, and his confessor Fleury, had denounced to him as a Pagan, asked the Regent in a kingly tone what M. Law was still doing in France.

"To tell the truth, he has nothing to do," replied His Highness, "and I will drop him two words on the subject."

The tremblers, a race that has never been more numerous than during the Regency, believed all was lost, because the Parliament was still at Pontoise. The nobility, in unison with the pleaders, sighed for its return, and it was well known that henceforward the presence of Law and the Parliament in the same town would be a symbol of the rope and the gallows. Steps were taken therefore—that is to say, promises were made, to shake d'Aguesseau's prejudices, and by dint of perseverance they were successful, since, on the morrow of his arrival in Paris, d'Argenson had the inscription put up over the door of the Chancellor's Hôtel: *Et homo factus est*. This was somewhat directed against the famous disinterestedness of the Cato of Fresnes.

Law resolved to leave, a poorer man, said he, than when he came to France. 'Tis true he left behind him a fortune in debts, and even his butcher claimed no less a sum than ten thousand livres. "M. Law," I said to him, "now is your season, speculation is doing wonderfully both in England and Holland."

"My Lord Archbishop," he answered, "that is as though I were to say to you, 'there are archbishoprics, not in the Mississippi, but in Egypt. Be off to them.'" There were tears in his eyes, when the Regent very cordially embraced him. "Monseigneur," he said, "the errors I have made are less grave than you may think; but am I not a man and liable to be deceived?"

"And to deceive others," murmured a soft voice, which was not mine.

"To conclude, Monseigneur, I beg you to investigate my conduct; I am satisfied that you will find neither malice nor fraud in it."

Before leaving, Law borrowed a certain amount to keep up the comedy, for he had millions at his disposal outside France, and if he is poor now, as they say, it is because he has gambled and lost. Bank or gambling-hell, it is all one to him, so long as he has a chance of gain.

It was so painful to Law to be at any distance from the Rue Quincampoix, that he went first to an estate which he possessed about six leagues from Paris. His friend, M. le Duc, conveyed his children in his own post-chaise, with the grey liveries of Madame de Prie. But for that precaution, he would have run the risk of being insulted. Madame Law remained in Paris to sell her husband's goods and chattels, in order to satisfy his creditors. But as long as Law was in France, at the gates of Paris, public opinion was not avenged. The Regent, in answer to all the sighs that were uttered to him, contented himself with saying "*mea culpa*." I myself must claim the honour of having entirely routed Law.

Rumours were circulating amongst the populace as to Law's whereabouts, and there was talk of burning at one and the same time the father, the children, and the Duc de Bourbon. As I had discovered this conspiracy, I placed spies and soldiers in disguise round Law's estate, to protect him and, at the same time, to surprise his relations with England, which were becoming more frequent. I had given orders for the seizure of all the papers, letters, and dispatches which left his house; I reserved to myself the right of examining these, before I forwarded them to their destination. They brought me, amongst other letters concerning the Bank, the following strange, serious piece of banter, in which I should not even yet believe, if I did not

possess the original. I read it over three or four times, thinking my eyes deceived me; then I burst out laughing.

I was astonished that this letter, addressed to William Northington, a London banker, whom I knew as an inveterate gambler, should not have been written in English, but, after perusing it, I realised that the writing of it in French was again a piece of bravado. Here it is, just as I received it; I have let no one take a copy of it except my friend Massillon:—

"My Lord,—Have you seen our friend Lord Stairs since he returned to London with three or four millions which I enabled him to win in the Rue Quincampoix? He will have told you what everybody tells of my System, that it resembles the giant's ladder to conquer Heaven. It is strange that the Bank, which has made so many fortunes, has not made my own, at least, not to the extent I had hoped; the Venice bankers have made me lose a heap of money, and I am now going to call in what remains. Would you believe that in France I could not borrow a thousand guineas on my note of hand? I am compelled, therefore, to apply to my debtors, of whom you, my Lord, are one. A gallant man like yourself will not have forgotten that I made a wager with you of a thousand guineas in 1698, that some day I would ruin France with my paper. It was, if my recollection is right, on the occasion of a bill of exchange for a thousand guineas, which I wished to draw upon Bernard, the Jewish banker of Paris; I could only offer you the Exchequer notes, which you refused, saying that paper would only be England's ruin; I shared your opinion on this point; I undertook, however, to make a wager in the above sum that in a few days I would render paper current in France; you, in the presence of Lord Stairs and Lady Colbridge, and of my Lord Cadogan, agreed to my wager on your loyal word, on the grounds, said you, that the French had too much wit to let themselves be caught in such a clumsy snare. I beg you, then, to tell me what you think, and whether I have not well and duly won my bet; I will take for my judges you first and the public voice of all Europe. So, my Lord, counting upon your word, I count upon the thousand guineas, and do not call upon you to add to them, although I have added to the wager. Observe, if you please, what I have done with the sole aid of my genius. I have reduced the King of France to be my

subject, for which alone, England ought to feel grateful to me. I will continue to sing my own praises, for here modesty would be false: I have made the Regent my comrade and my tool; the proudest nobles my clerks; Princesses of the Blood my mistresses; the greatest ladies my w—s; all France my dupe and milch-cow. To conclude, do you know how I shall depart? The premier Prince of the Blood has become my post-master. I shall be in Brussels almost immediately; before I leave for Venice, where my wife will join me, send, if you please, the thousand guineas to Jean Mécuo, the banker, who must now be back in Brussels. I have omitted one detail which will make you laugh; I am, at the present moment, as good a Roman Catholic as anyone who has received baptism, communion, and confirmation. You will think, as I do, that it was not too high a price to pay for the privilege of the Mississippi, tobacco, and the mint. All that I lack are patents of nobility and the title of duke. Is it not diverting thus to flout a nation for four consecutive years? Your affectionate compatriot, JOHN LAW."

This inexplicable letter constituted a genuine crime of high treason; I hesitated about imparting it to the incredulous Regent; Madame de Tencin persuaded me to do so, since, as she said, there was no reason why I should conciliate Law; but she recommended me not to let such an important document out of my possession. I found the Prince exhausted from an interview with M. d'Antin, who proved to him on his fingers, that Law's bank had brought France in more than a hundred millions; unfortunately I was not present at this curious calculation, which had made His Royal Highness yawn. I dismissed d'Antin with my letter, which was a terrible upset to his financial calculations. I wished to read it to the Prince, but he snatched it from my hands with these words: "Cursed college pedant! When will you give up reminding me that I was once under your rod?" I perceived that he was not in his ordinary humour, and resolved to hold my peace, when a boisterous fit of laughter warned me of a sudden change of thought in the Prince, who, instead of finishing the perusal, redoubled his immoderate laughter, until he rolled convulsively on the floor and lost consciousness. I suddenly remembered the death of M. de Saint-Laurent, and was tempted to fly by the door or window; but a moment's

reflection restored my prudence; I shut and double-locked the doors of the closet, and gave the Regent assistance, which he seemed to be past needing. He was breathless, and blood was pouring from his mouth and nose. My hair stood on end. I dared not look around me lest I should see nothing but abysses. A feeble sigh proceeded from his motionless body; I clung once more to life and hope; with tears in my eyes, I gently called upon Philippe, who neither answered nor heeded me. I know not what incongruous idea made me mechanically take Law's letter, and, unconscious myself of what I was doing, I read it in a low voice. I could not persuade myself that this letter, however diverting, was the cause of the sudden attack; but, as it happened, the Prince, struck in the midst of his swoon by the monotonous murmur of my reading, gradually regained his senses, and with them his irresistible desire to laugh. The blood he had lost had relieved him. But for this hæmorrhage, due entirely to chance, he would have been struck down with the apoplexy, with which Chirac had threatened him every day for ten years. I assisted him to a seat, and, by his orders, removed every trace of blood, "because," said he, "if it is discovered that I was taken ill, that ruffian Chirac will want to bleed me, and will be the cause of my humours mingling with my blood."

"I will answer you, as he would, that it is a long time since they have mingled."

"In short, I thank Law for having procured me this wholesome, natural bleeding."

"Do you not wish, Monseigneur, to seize his person while it is still in your power?"

"Heaven forbid! I am not so ungrateful as to return evil for good. 'Tis true that he deserves to be broken on the wheel, and his letter would be enough to condemn him, even if justice had no other grievance against him; but, in revenge, he deserves eternal gratitude for having saved my life, though, I confess, unintentionally."

"But, Monseigneur, he has played with the King, the State, with you! . . ."

"I grant it! But his letter is admirable, and I would forgive him everything, if it had been a hundred times worse. In short, I shall beg him to leave France, and that in such a manner that he will understand my warning is mercy."

"Ah! Monseigneur! Clemency is often only weakness."

"Do not let us be generous by halves; let us destroy this paper so that my honour may be safe."

"It seems to me, Monseigneur, that if you are so much indebted to Law, I have a share in the debt, and I beg you to allow me to keep this letter in my own possession."

"On condition that you do not make a bad use of it."

There was a violent banging at the door; I hid the letter, and opened to Master Chirac, who came hobbling in, hat on head, with his gold-headed cane out to try the ground, as though there was a precipice to avoid at every step. The Prince made a gesture to impose silence upon me as to what had passed.

"Ah! ah! what were you doing, shut up like this with M. de Cambrai?" he said.

"We were occupied with affairs of State," replied the Prince, dropping his eyes in order to avoid the physician's.

"Phew! Monseigneur, you are mighty pale, and you were red enough this morning."

"You need not be surprised; your physic was asking me questions which would put a corpse to the blush."

"Ah! ah! apoplexy! apoplexy!"

"I have grown almost used to that alarming malady from always hearing you prophesying it."

"Oh! one bleeding would preserve you for more than six months."

"If I were to believe you, I ought to expect to die suddenly, at table, in my bed—who knows where?"

"Tut! Tut! That would not be at confession! Suppose, however, you were in conference with M. de Cambrai when the apoplexy took you?"

"I understand you," I cried, "but I have still a little absolution at the service of His Highness."

Law did not wait for the express which the Regent sent him, covering in fair phrases what might be too harsh in a definite dismissal. He knew that his letter was in my hands, and although he had a thought of passing it off as a jest, he showed no less haste in reaching Brussels. He sent back the post-chaise to Madame de Prie, with a long letter about his wager, and a diamond worth a hundred thousand livres. Madame de Tencin was much incensed at this preference, for she had shown Law as

much kindness as Madame de Prie. Moreover, he owed thanks to M. le Duc, who furnished him with relays of horses for his hurried journey, and with ten well-armed men for his security. This escort was doubtless of use in keeping off the gentlemen of the road, who would not have missed so fine a prey. Law wrote also to the Regent, to make excuses for his letter to Northington; he was shown that he was unworthy of an answer. Madame Law paid a few debts; but the object of her sojourn of several months in Paris was the recovery of enormous sums which His Highness was too generous to confiscate. The following year I succeeded in sending Law's brother to the Bastille. He had six millions in stock; but his money would have opened the doors of a better guarded prison. At the present time, Law is in Venice with his wife, and does not live like a Prince. I do not believe him to be cured of the passion for play and Systems; but fortune is inconstant with her best beloved favourites.

FRENCH EDITOR'S NOTE

It was my intention to have brought the publication of these memoirs to a close with a hasty summary of events up to the death of Dubois; but the memoirs of the Duc de Richelieu, which form part of the same collection, contain in detail all that I should have only been able to sum up in the most succinct manner possible; it would have been a double task. I should not, moreover, have dared to attempt a competition so much to my disadvantage; and I must refer readers to the charming memoirs of the Duc de Richelieu. It is in those that they will find the last moments of the Regency, that eternal blot upon our history, and the lively, witty, and dramatic narrative of a contemporary will amply replace a few cold, dry, analytical pages. It will be enough to recall here that the death of the Duc d'Orléans occurred only three months after that of Dubois, who was carried off by his urinary trouble on the 10th of August 1723. The epitaph they gave him is a faithful summary of his whole life.

Rome rougit d'avoir rougi
Le m—— qui git ici.

THE END

II. R

INDEX

- Aguesseau, d', i. 280
 Albergotti, i. 98
 Alberoni, Cardinal, i. and the Duc de Vendôme, 23
 — ii. his intrigues, 85; his portrait, 85; his antecedents, 86; opposes Quadruple Alliance, 93, 98; his conspiracy, 106; conspiracy discovered by Dubois, 113; proofs of his guilt, 117-119; disgraced, 154; exiled, 154
 Alincourt, d', ii. 197
 Amelot, ii. 104
 Ancenis, d', arrests Madame du Maine, ii. 130
Anariennes, ii. 94
 Anjou, Duc d', i. 245-246
 Annette, i. an embroideress, 252; Dubois in love with, 253; a mock wedding, 259; at Suresnes, 264; death, 265
 Antin, d', i. 98
 — ii. 82, 235
 Arcy, d', i. 83, 115, 116, 142, 150, 174
 Ardennes, d', i. 10
 Argenson, d', i. lieutenant of police, 217; receives Dubois, 218; inquires into the Dauphin's death, 241
 — ii. in the pay of the Duc d' Orléans, 19; as controller, 103; mysterious visit from Dubois, 109; his activity, 135; undermines Law's system, 239; his unpopularity, 242
 Argenton, Comtesse, d', *vide* Mlle. Sery
 Armenonville, d', ii. 103
 Arnoux, Père, i. 240
 Aubigné, d', i. a brother of Madame de Maintenon, 118; his prodigality, 119; his wit, 120
 Aumont, Madame d', i. 40
 Averno, Madame d', ii. 196
 Balbieu, i. 133
 Bank, Law's, ii. 38, 100, 241
 Barbezioux, de, i. 158, 189, 197
 Baron, i. the actor, 185; his character, 186; as apothecary, 210; his friendship for Père La Rue, 221
 — ii. at the Chapel Royal, 76; his *Andrienne*, 94
 Barry, Lady, i. 194
 Basnage, ii. 58, 66, 106
 Bastide, ii. 220
 Bayeux, Bishop of, ii. 51
 Beauvilliers, de, i. 75, 99
 Bélinghen, Madame de, i. 49
 Bellefonds, de, i. 66
 Benderitter, ii. 49
 Benserade, ii. 64, 72
 Bernard, Samuel, i. 254, 264, 266
 Berri, Duc de, i. his mother, 99; his face and character, 225; marries a daughter of the Duc d' Orléans, 228; his infidelities, 229; a scene with his wife, 272; death, 274
 Berri, Duchesse de, i. as Mlle. d' Orléans, 223; before her marriage, 224; married to the Duc de Berri, 228; mutual agreement between husband and wife, 229; lack of self-restraint, 269; her capricious nature, 270
 — ii. at "The Well of Love," 28; meets Peter the Great, 79; her gaiety, 157; at the theatre, 166-168; her strange fantasies, 173; marriage to Riom, 173; illness, 174; death, 175-176
 Bessière, Nathalie, i. 178; *vide* Mlle. Sery
 Beuvron, i. 77
 — ii. 74
 Beyd, Mehernet, ii. 4
 Bezon, Madame, ii. 239
 Bezons, Maréchal de, ii. 28
 Bidding, Sarah, ii. 97, 104
 Bissy, Cardinal de, i. 279
 — ii. 225
 Blouin, i. 57
 Blois, Mlle. de, i. her portrait, 137; marriage to the Duc de Chartres,

- 140; indifference to her husband, 152; becomes Duchesse d'Orléans, 204
 Bodeau, Abbé, i. 14, 66
 Boivin, Henri, i. 19
 Boivin, Jean, i. 19
 Bontemps, i. 81, 203
 Bossuet, i. tutor to the *Grand Dauphin*, 95; at war with Quietism, 167; triumphs over Quietism, 171
 Bouchu, Madame de, ii. 236
 Boudin, ii. 238, 241
 Boufflers, de, i. 148
 Bouillon, Madame de, i. 57
 Bourbon, Duc de, i. early escapade, 66; weds Mlle. de Nantes, 108
 Bourbon, Louis-Henri, Duc de, i. weds Mlle. de Conti, 275
 — ii. member of the Council of Regency, 28; gambling propensities, 235
 Bourdaloue, i. 164
 Bourgogne, Duc de, *vide* Grand Dauphin
 Bourgogne, Duc de, i. son of the Grand Dauphin, 99; his love for his wife, 236; sorrow at his wife's death, 238; illness, 239; death, 240
 Bourgogne, Duchesse de, *vide* Grand Dauphin
 Bourgogne, Duchesse de, i. inquires after English women, 199; the darling of Louis XIV, 235; her love for Nangis, 236; death, 238; her letters, 274
 — ii. on Richelieu's list, 140
 Boursel, ii. 250
 Bourvalais, ii. 33, 104
 Bretagne, Duc de, i. his death, 244
 Breteuil, de, ii. 163
 Bretonvilliers, Madame de, i. 156
 Brigaut, Abbé, i. an adventurer, 178
 — ii. in the Cellamare conspiracy, 113; takes flight, 121; arrested, 122; confesses, 129; as accuser, 141
 Briords, i. 67
 Broglie, i. 66
 — ii. 156
 Brissac, i. 78
 Bussière, ii. 65
 Buval, ii. 112, 113, 114
 Cadogan, Lord, ii. 52, 58, 61, 68, 90
 Callière, de, ii. 69
 Campistron, ii. 86
 Carmelites, The, i. their occupations, 84; bad reputation, 84; Louis XIV threatens to drive them out of France, 85
 — ii. considered a pest, 9
 Carrette, i. 157, 158, 161
 Casan, i. 96
 Castagnère, Père, ii. 55, 58, 60, 65, 150
 Castel, ii. 26
 Caumartin, de, ii. 75
 Cavois, i. 147
 Caylus, Madame de, i. 128
 Cellamare, ii. his conspiracy discovered, 113; he is warned, 119; his attachment to Mlle. de Valois, 122; arrested, 123; his house searched, 125; his letters to Alberoni printed, 126
 Chabrières, Prior of, i. 46
 Chalais, i. 242
 Charolais, Mlle. de, i. 140
 — ii. her love for Richelieu, 137, 138, 139; visits Richelieu in the Bastille, 148
 Charon, Mlle., i. 221
 Charost, i. 121
 Chartres, Duc de, *vide* the Regent
 Chartres, Duchesse de, *vide* Mlle. de Blois
 Chartres, Mlle. de, ii. 129
 Chartres, Duc de, ii. son of the Regent, 158
 Chateaufort, ii. French ambassador at the Hague, 41, 52, 53, 54, 55, 61, 63, 65; Councillor of State, 150
 Chateaufort, Madame de, i. 137
 Chatelude, Madame de, i. 4
 Chaulieu, Abbé de, i. his Epicurean tastes, 42, 43, 49; assists Dubois, 55; at the Carmelites Convent, 87; a poet, 112; remark about Ninon de Lenclos, 171
 Chef, ii. 45, 89, 97, 220
 Chevalier, Madame, i. 66
 Chevreuse, Madame de, i. 75, 169
 Chirac, i. 237
 — ii. 72, 155, 255
 Chivernay, de, ii. 247
 Choiseul, Madame de, i. 36
 Chouin, Mlle., i. maid of honour, 43; attachment to the Grand Dauphin, 96; weds the Grand Dauphin, 96; in retirement, 97
 Clément, i. 99
 Clérambault, Madame de, i. 42, 174

- Clermont-Chatte, i. 101, 102
 Cohorn, i. 149
 — ii. 2
Compagnie d'Occident, ii. 101, 102, 227
 Condé, Prince de, i. marries his grandson to Mlle. de Nantes, 108; his contradictory character, 109; the Foxes and M. Rose, 109; cruelty to his wife, 110; his mistresses, 112; death, 232
 Conflans, Chevalier de, i. 206
 Conti, Prince de, i. jealous of his wife, 100; dies of small-pox, 101
 Conti, Princess de, i. daughter of Louis XIV and La Vallière, 100; weds the Prince de Conti, 100; attempts to kill herself, 102; declines to marry the Duc de Chartres, 130
 Conti, Prince de, married to Mlle. de Bourbon, i. 275
 Conti, Louis Armand, Prince de, ii. his deformity, 25; his mother, 26; vengeance on the Morival, 27
 Corneille, Thomas, i. 159
 Cornuel, Madame de, i. 76, 114
 Coulanges, de, i. 41, 69
 Coulanges, Madame de, i. 160, 161
 Council of Regency, i. 280
 — ii. 28, 95, 103
 Council of Conscience, i. 280
 — ii. 24
 Craggs, Lord, ii. 90, 95, 96, 104
 Crébillon, i. 248
 — ii. 163
 Crosat, ii. 75, 100
 Dangeau, de, i. 40, 98
 Dauphin, le Grand, i. known as Monseigneur, 44, 94; his character and physiognomy, 94; his indolence, 95; attachment to Mlle. Chouin, 96; secretly weds Mlle. Chouin, 96; the actress Ransin 97; Mlle. Chouin's *Kettledrums*, 97; hostility to Madame de Maintenon, 98; his children, 99; grief at "Monsieur's" death, 204; death, 235
 Dauphine, la Grande, i. her sons, 99; her Bavarian superstitiousness, 99; her maid Bessola, 100
 Dauphin, le, *vide* Duc de Bourgogne
 Dauphine, la, *vide* Duchesse de Bourgogne
 Davisart, ii. 132
 Deffant, Madame de, ii. 193, 195
 Descoteaux, i. 181, 185
 Desmares, Mlle., i. as Baron's Mistress, 185; her popularity, 187; taken to the Duc de Chartres, 188
 — ii. at the Comédie Française, 166
 Desmares, Mlle., ii. daughter of La Desmares, 166; marries the Marquis de Ségur, 167
 Desmerets, ii. 36
 Desplanes, Madame de, i. 44
 Destouches, Néricault, ii. 88, 89, 96, 98
 Dillon, Lieut.-General, ii. 64
 Dombes, Prince de, son of the Duc du Maine, ii. 131
 Dorset, Duke of, i. 194
 Doucin, Père, ii. 16
 Dubois, Cardinal, i. birth, 1, 2; was he baptized? 3; at the Jesuit's College, 6; tutor at Bordeaux, 9; intrigue with Pierrette, 10; marries Pierrette, 11; has a son, 12; leaves Bordeaux for Paris, 13; good-bye, Pierrette, 16; tutor to Riancé, 16; tutor to the President de Gournes, 17; at the College St. Michel, 18; with the Marquis de Pluvant, 22; meets the Duc de Vendôme, 25; snuff for Madame de Grancey, 30; enters the household of the Duc de Chartres, 31; presented to Madame d'Orléans, 38; succeeds Saint-Laurent as sub-governor, 56; justifies his conduct to the Duc de Chartres, 60; adventure at the Carmelite Convent, 86-92; presented to the King, 115; presented to Madame de Maintenon, 116; wins the favour of Madame de Maintenon, 118; sent by Père la Chaise to Versailles, 132; understanding with Madame de Maintenon, 134; arranges the marriage of the Duc de Chartres, 135; retires to the Abbey of Airvault, 140; introduced to the Duchesse de Chartres, 142; snubbed by Louis XIV, 143; given the Abbey of Saint-Just, 143; his fortune in 1692, 143; at the siege of Namur, 144; visits La Fontaine, 154; the quack Carrette, 157; visits Thomas Corneille, 159; visit to the Quietists, 168; acquaintance with Ninon de Lenclos, 172; at the opera, 181; on a mission to England, 190; as

- Chevalier Dubois, 191; returns to France, 198; adventure as the Abbé Dutrot, 212-216; arranges the marriage of the Duc de Berri, 222; Dubois meets his wife, 230; Dubois in love, 251; a mock marriage, 258; a wedding night, 260; a secret mission to England, 281; returns to France, 282
- ii. Prediction of Earl Stairs, 4; prepares the Duc d'Orléans' speech, 19; forgotten, 28; made Councillor of State, 31; a brush with Madame, 32; a kinsman hanged, 34; meets Law, 38; to go to the Hague, 42; as ambassador extraordinary, 43; as the Chevalier Saint-Albin, 45; interview with a Brussels banker, 47; presented to George I, 49; Triple Alliance signed, 62; a letter from the Regent, 62; a letter from George I, 64; at Amsterdam, 64; a sinister warning, 67; secretary of the king's cabinet, 69; presented to Peter the Great, 79; accused of being in the pay of England, 87; appointed ambassador to England, 87; arrives at Westminster, 89; adventure with a German officer, 91; accident at Newmarket races, 92; back in Paris, 94; again in London, 94; Quadruple Alliance, signed, 96; returns to France, 98; adventure at La Fillon's, 107-108; informs the Regent of the conspiracy, 110; arrests Cellamare, 124; pursues his investigations, 141; the story of the Iron Mask, 141-145; learns the secret from the Regent, 145; satisfaction at Alberoni's disgrace, 154; promised the Archbishopric of Cambrai, 206; the installation ceremony, 223; an anxious moment with the Regent, 255; Dubois' death, 257
- Dubois, Jean, the Cardinal's father, i. 1
- Dubois, the Cardinal's son, ii. 87-88
- Dubois, the Cardinal's brother, ii. 226
- Dubourg, ii. 93
- Dubuisson, ii. 97
- Duclos, i. 190
- Du Mesnil, Chevalier, ii. 130, 132
- Dumont, i. 96
- Dunoyer, Mme. ii. 59, 64
- Duroure, ii. 96
- Dusmenil, i. the actor, 182; an adventure with Mlle. Maupin, 183-184
- Dutrot, Abbé, i. 212, 252
- Effiat, d', i. 77-79, 206, 245
- Effiat, Mme. d', i. 174
- Effiat, Abbé d', i. 56
- Elboeuf, d', i. 46
- Emilie, ii. 156, 191, 192
- Epinay, Mme. d', ii. 5
- Espagny, d', i. 44
- Estrades, d', i. 33, 36, 82
- Estrées, Mme. d', i. 46
- Eu, Comte d', son of the Duc du Maine, ii. 131
- Falaris, Mme. de, ii. 198
- Fagon, i. 47, 117, 202, 238, 241
- ii. 7, 11, 15
- Faure, Abbé, i. 143
- Felix, i. 43, 46, 54
- Fénélon, i. 99, 115, 166, 170, 171
- Feuillet, Père, i. 201
- Feuquières, Mme. de, i. 160
- Fiennes, Mlle. de, i. 50
- Fillon, La, ii. 94, 107, 217
- Firmaçon, ii. 192, 194
- Fléchier, i. 95
- Fleury, Mlle. i. 97
- Fleury, Joly de, i. 280
- Fleury, ii. tutor to Louis XV, 70
- Florence, Mlle. i. 182
- Florence, Grand Duchess of, ii. 179
- Fontanges, Mlle. de, i. 80
- Fontenelle, ii. 42, 83, 84, 92, 102, 151, 227, 238
- Force, Mlle. de la, i. 96
- Forceville, i. 257
- ii. 45, 66, 223
- Fouquet, ii. 10, 145,
- Fourquieux, ii. 35
- Francine, i. 96
- Gallican Church, ii. 28
- Gaillard, Père, i. 156
- Gate of Love*, i. 67
- Gédoyn, Abbé, i. 172
- Gendron, i. 35, 202
- George I., ii. at the age of fifty-six, 49; a toast to the Pretender, 51; a letter to Dubois, 64; recommends Dubois for an archbishopric, 208
- Gervais, i. 47

- Gèvres, Mme. de, ii. 238
- Godefroy, ii. 32
- Godet, Bishop, i. 167
- Goertz, ii. 77
- Golostin, Comte de, ii. 63
- Gordon, Madame, ii. 72
- Gourges, Président de, i. 8, 11, 12
- Gourges, i. 17-18
- Grammont, Comte de, i. 206
- Grancey, Madame de, i. 30, 40, 50
- Grancey, Abbé de, i. 206
- Grécourt, Abbé, i. 122
- ii. 139, 159
- Grignan, Madame de, i. 95, 162
- Guéméné, ii. 180
- Guiche, Duc de, i. 49, 76, 280
- ii. 17
- Guyon, Madame, i. the founder of Quietism, 166; a sermon by her, 169; arrested, 170
- Hamilton, i. 112
- Hamilton, Miss, i. 206
- Harcourt, Abbé d', i. 46
- Harcourt, Maréchal d', ii. 28
- Harlay, Archbishop, i. 40, 81, 155
- Harlay, Président de, i. 156
- Hébert, i. 201
- Heinsius, ii. 56, 57
- Henriette, Madame, i. Monsieur's first wife, 76; her wit, 77; death by poison, 78
- Holland Gazette*, ii. 59, 60
- Homberg, i. 249
- Howe, Lady, i. 195
- Huchon, i. 115
- Huxelles, Maréchal d', ii. 42, 61, 63, 93, 95, 103
- Iron Mask, ii. Louis XIV tells the secret, 10; Dubois' investigations, 141; the gaoler's tale, 142; Fouquet, 145
- James II, i. arrival in France, 120; sympathy at Paris, 121; welcomed by Louis XIV, 123; ridiculous behaviour, 127
- Jansenists, the, ii. 18
- Jesuits, the, i. 131
- Junca, du, ii. 141
- La Balue, ii. 143
- La Bessola, i. 99, 100
- La Billarderie, ii. 130
- La Chaise, Père, i. confessor to Louis XIV, 74; the confidant of Madame de Maintenon, 80; marries Madame de Maintenon to Louis XIV, 81; his large ears, 120; his character, 131; gives Dubois a commission, 132
- La Fare, i. 42, 49, 87, 206, 209
- La Ferté, Madame, i. 58, 106
- La Feuillade, i. 58
- La Fontaine, i. 33, 48, 122, 154
- La Force, ii. 159
- La Grange-Chancel, ii. his character, 158, 159; author of the *Philippics*, 160
- La Haye, i. his conceit, 270; refuses to accompany the Duchesse de Berri, 273; rewarded by the Duchess, 274
- La Meilleraye, de, i. 193
- La Meilleraye, Madame de, i. 48
- La Rue, Père, i. 220, 221
- ii. 163
- La Souris, ii. 189, 190, 191
- La Vallière, Mlle. de, i. her love for Louis XIV, 76; as Sister Louise, 84; meeting with the Duc de Chartres, 89-92
- La Villière, ii. 103
- Laboëssière, i. 185
- Lacombe, i. 166
- Lafiteau, Père, ii. 201, 202, 217
- Lajonquière, ii. 147
- Lamothe, ii. 71, 102, 227
- Landi, Beretti, ii. 98
- Langeron, Madame de, i. 108
- Lassaraz, ii. 58, 66
- Latour, Père, i. 89, 164
- ii. 76
- Launay, Mlle. de, ii. 114, 133, 146, 150, 152
- Laurent, i. 37, 61, 86, 92
- Lauzun, i. 83, 103, 113, 114, 120, 121, 124, 125
- Laval de, ii. 121, 135
- Laverne, ii. 55, 62, 68, 89, 96, 98, 111
- Law, ii. established in France by Stairs, 35; his antecedents, 36; as he was in 1715, 37; founds his bank, 38; how it worked, 100; buys Louisiana, 101; his pride and luxury, 231; his admirers, 236; turns Catholic, 240; downfall of his system, 243; his life in danger, 245; leaves France 252; a letter to a London banker, 253; in Venice, 257
- Leblanc, ii. 103, 122, 123, 135, 245, 246, 248

- Ledru, Madame, i. 212-216
 Lefebure, i. 7, 8
 Lefort, ii. 79
 Lenclos, Ninon de, i. at the age of eighty, 171; an octogenarian amour, 173; kindness to Dubois, 191
 Le Nostre, i. 199
 Lesage, ii. 34
 Lesdiguières, Madame de, i. 156
 Letellier, Archbishop, i. 49
 Le Tellier, Père, i. 222, 234, 240, 241, 249, 280
 — ii. 16, 27
 Libois de, ii. 123, 124
 Lillebonne, Mlle. de, i. 50
 Lillebonne, de, i. 98
 Littleton, Lady, i. 194
 Longpierre, Baron de, i. 268
 Longueville, Madame de, i. 106
 Lorraine, Chevalier de, i. 40, 50, 54, 72, 76, 77-79, 98, 101, 103, 134
 Louis XIV, i. reproves Villequier, 41; his natural good looks, 72, 73; his uncleanness and gluttony, 73; his mania for etiquette, 74; his selfishness, 74; his mistresses, 76; weds Madame de Maintenon, 81; a famous visit to the Carmelite Convent, 92; his children by La Vallière, 100; his children by La Montespan, 105; his objection to scent, 117; receives James II, 123-127; indifference at Monsieur's death, 204; his moral callousness, 274; his will, 278-280
 — ii. illness, 6; treated by quacks, 12; death, 15; body embalmed, 27; profanity at the obsequies, 27
 Louis XV, ii. comes to the Tuileries, 32; separated from Madame de Ventadour, 70; at the age of twelve, 70; interview with Peter the Great, 80
 Louisiana, ii. 101, 102, 228
 Louville, de, ii. 49
 Louvois, de, i. 15, 69, 81, 107, 120
 — ii. 57
 Loysons, Mlle., i. 257
 Lucas, i. 212, 252
 Lude, Madame de, i. 111
 Ludres, Madame de, i. 146
 Lussan, i. 67
 Lutzelstein, Countess of, i. 128
 Luxembourg, Maréchal de, i. 148
 Madame, i. Duchesse Charlotte

- d'Orléans, 31; her appearance, 37; her feats at letter-writing, 38; her pride in the Palatine princes, 42; her German frankness, 49; the "Strumpets of Strasburg," 127-128; her indignation at the marriage of the Duc de Chartres and Mlle. de Blois, 139; seeks to marry her daughter Mlle. d'Orléans, 176; indifference at her husband's death, 203
 — ii. A letter about Dubois, 29; her malicious nature, 33; promises Massillon a bishopric, 75; warned of the Cellamare conspiracy, 121; wishes to marry Mlle. de Valois, 179; indignation against Dubois, 211; in fear for the Regent's life, 246
 Mademoiselle, La Grande, i. secretly married to Lauzun, 83; retires to a convent, 84; her memoirs, 112; her love for romance, 113; her marriage with Lauzun, 113
 Magny, ii. 130, 132
 Maine, Duc du, i. son of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, 106; his ugliness, 106; weds Mlle. de Charolais, 140; criticised by Dubois, 250; powers given him in the king's will, 280
 — ii. in the death chamber of Louis XIV, 14; speech in parliament, 22; defeat in parliament, 24; reception by his wife, 24; member of the Council of Regency, 28; implicated in the Cellamare conspiracy, 114; arrested, 130; refuses to confess, 146; set free, 151
 Maine, Duchesse du, lectures her husband, i. 248
 — ii. Louis XIV's dying advice, 13; implicated in the Cellamare conspiracy, 114; arrested, 130; her love-letters to Cardinal de Polignac, 133; confesses, 135; rage at being imprisoned, 147; set free, 151; reconciled with her husband, 152
 Maine, Mlle. du, ii. 131
 Maintenon, Madame de, i. her influence at court, 74; her sufferings, 75; marriage with Louis XIV, 81; dislikes the Grand Dauphin, 98; plot against Mlle. Chouin and the Princesse de Conti, 101-102;

- governess to Madame de Montespan's children, 107; known as Madame Maintenance, 115; meets the Queen of England, 126; intrigues with Dubois to marry the Duc de Chartres, 133-136; her portrait by Mignard, 160
 — ii. Present at Louis XIV's death, 13; seeks oblivion at Saint-Cyr, 25; a meeting with Madame, 33; receives Peter the Great, 83; death, 178
 Malézieux, ii. 114, 141, 251
 Manet, i. 257, 258
 — ii. 43, 234, 238
 Maransac, ii. 23, 70
 Marchand, i. 242
 Mardick Canal, ii. 41
 Maréchal, i. 238, 241, 282
 — ii. 7, 12, 15, 155
 Marei, Madame de, i. 110
 Marie-Anne, vide Princesse de Conti
 Marly, i. Louis XIV at, 74
 Maroy, i. 21
 — ii. 46, 89, 111, 116, 209, 223, 233
 Marsan, Comte de, i. 50, 101, 103, 134
 Massillon, i. his early promise, 164; his character, 165; with the Quietists, 168; a visit to Madame, 226
 — ii. funeral oration over Louis XIV, 15; his hopes of a bishopric, 72; preaches the Lenten Sermons, 75; made Bishop of Clermont, 76; sponsor to Dubois, 219
 Mauconseil, ii. 140
 Maucroix, i. 33, 52, 57
 Maupin, Mlle., i. at the opera, 181; a famous duellist, 183; in man's attire at a ball, 184
 Maurepas, ii. 103
 Mazarin, Madame de, i. 192, 193
 Mazarin, Duc de, i. 193-194
 Meaux, i. 95, 120, 122
 Mesmes, Président de, ii. 120, 129, 244
Mercurie Galant, i. 159
 Meudon, Court at, i. 98
 Mignard, i. 160, 163
 Mississippi, ii. 100, 101, 102, 227
 Modena, Prince de, ii. 179, 180
 Modena, Princesse de, vide Mlle. de Valois
 Molé, Chevalier de, ii. 89
 II. S
 Monmouth, Duke of, i. 76
 Monseigneur, vide Grand Dauphin
 Monsieur, i. how he gave audience, 22; his appearance, 27; his morals, 76; seeks a wife for the Duc de Chartres, 130; attached to his children, 175; death, 202-203; funeral obsequies, 205
 Monsieur le Prince, vide Condé
 Montauban, Mlle. de, ii. 133, 147
 Montausier, i. 95
 Montchevreuil, i. 81
 Montchevreuil, Madame de, i. 49, 96, 112
 Montéléon, ii. 108, 116
 Mortemart, Madame de, i. 170
 Montespan, Madame de, i. her love for Louis XIV motivated by ambition, 76; her passion for governing, 80; retires into a convent, 80; at the Carmelites, 89; brought to court by her husband, 105; intrigue with the Maréchal de Noailles, 108; contributes to Lauzun's arrest, 113
 Montespan, de, i. sent to Guienne, 106
 Montmorency, Mlle. de, i. 49
 Montpensier, Mlle. de, vide La Grande Mademoiselle
 Morangis, Comte de, ii. 55
 Morival, ii. 26
 Munster, Duchess of, ii. 92, 94
 Namur, siege of, i. 148
 Nancre, de, ii. 93
 Nangis, i. 236
 Nantes, Mlle. de, i. a daughter of Madame de Montespan, 107; her resemblance to the Maréchal de Noailles, 108; her bright character, 108; marriage at the age of twelve, 108
 Nantes, Bishop of, ii. 220
 Nerwinde, Battle of, i. 152
 Nesle, Madame de, ii. 28, 169
 Nevers, Duc de, i. 112
 Nevers, Madame de, i. 112
 Noailles, Mlle. de, i. 49
 Noailles, Maréchal de, i. 97, 107
 — ii. 93
 Noailles, Cardinal de, i. 279
 — ii. 216
 Nocé, de, ii. 56, 95, 156, 160, 213
 Northington, ii. 253
 Nostradamus, i. 233
 Novion, Président de, ii. 241

- Œdipus*, the, i. 158, 161, 165
 Ollac, Madame de, i. 106
 Orange, Prince of, i. 152, 189
 Orange, Princess of, i. 155
 Ormesson, d', ii. 103
 Ormond, Duke of, i. 196
 Orléans, Duc d', *vide Monsieur*
 Orléans, Duchesse d', *vide Madame*
 Orléans, Duc d', *vide the Regent*
 Orléans, Duchesse d', *vide Mlle. de Blois*
 Orléans, Mlle. d', i. sister to the Duc de Chartres, 174; gossip concerning her birth, 174; affection for her brother the Duc de Chartres, 175; illness, 176; marriage to the Duc de Lorraine, 177
 Orléans, Mlle. d', ii. daughter of the Regent, 168; her tastes, 168; infatuation for Cauchereau, 169; retires to the Abbey of Chelles, 171; becomes Abbess, 172
 Orléans, Chevalier d', i. son of the Regent and Mlle. de Sery, 180
 Palais-Marchand, 212, 252
 Palaprat, i. 146
 Parabère, Madame de, ii. the Regent's mistress, 31; at Asnieres, 149; her character, 184; story of a diamond, 186; her features, 187; renders Dubois a service, 216
 Parliament, the, ii. meets on Louis XIV's death, 20; its decisions, 24; intractable, 242, 248
 Peguilhem, i. 124
 Pecquet, ii. 68, 88, 97, 110
 Peter the Great, ii. arrival in Paris, 77; his character, 78; night at the Luxembourg, 80; at the opera, 81; a visit to Madame de Maintenon, 83; at the tomb of Richelieu, 84
Philippics, the, ii. 158, 160
 Pierrette, i. at Bordeaux, 10; marries Dubois, 11; her life in Paris, 14-15; farewell Dubois, 16; regains her husband, 230; an unpleasant meeting, 258
 — ii. turns up again, 209
 Pluvant, de, i. 22
 Polignac, Vicomte de, i. 206
 Polignac, Cardinal de, ii. 114, 121, 129, 131, 134, 152
 Polignac, Madame de, ii. 169, 183
 Pompadour, ii. 114, 121, 135
 Pontchartrain, ii. 33
 Porto-Carrero, ii. 108, 110, 113, 116
 Pothon, i. 267
 Prie, Madame de, ii. 235, 352
 Puget, Père, i. 154
 Purl, i. 61, 86, 92, 191, 257
 Purnon, i. 78
 Quadruple Alliance, ii. 93, 96, 98
 Queen, the, i. wife of Louis XIV, 79; a death-bed remark, 80
 — ii. a story of a liaison, 10
 Queen of England, i. wife of James II. 124
 Quietism, i. 166
 Quincampoix, Rue, ii. 204, 227, 232, 242
 Quoniam, ii. 230
 Rabutin, Bussy de, i. 161
 Racine, i. refuses to become preceptor to the Duc de Chartres, 54; at the camp of Namur, 147; the sand in the spy-glass, 148; Quietism, 167
 — advice to La Grange-Chancel, ii. 159
 Rambures, Mlle, i. 96
 Ransin, i. 97
 Raslin, i. 26, 28, 31, 37, 49
 Ravannes, i. 205, 219, 243
 — ii. 231
 Regent, the, i. meets Dubois, 34; at the age of nine, 35; intrigue with Madame de Vieuville, 48; a conversation with the young Saint-Simon, 58; adventure with Mlle. Rose, 65; a fire in the Rue de Richelieu, 68; aptitude for study, 71; visits the Carmelites, 86; as "Mlle. Charlotte," 87; adventure in a convent, 87-92; objects to marriage, 135; weds Mlle. de Blois, 140; at the siege of Namur, 144; wounded, 150; early passion for his sister, 176; liaison with Mlle. de Sery, 180; becomes Duc d'Orléans, 205; his Epicurean court, 205; adventure as M. Lucas, 212-216; adventure in a "house," 219; suspicions attached to him, 241; saves the life of the Duc d'Anjou, 246; discountenances the Duc du Maine, 248; temporary unpopularity, 249; a wedding supper, 259; hears of Louis XIV's will, 278
 — ii. interview with Louis XIV,

- 8; opens the Parliament, 20; claims the Regency, 22; becomes Regent, 24; interested in Law, 100, 101; determines to arrest Cellamare, 123; jealous of Richelieu, 138; visits the Bastille, 143; suffers from apoplexy, 155; fondness for his daughters, 158; at a performance of the *Œdipus*, 165; opinions concerning the Regent in 1720, 194; makes Dubois an archbishop, 206; faces a tumult, 247; a fit of apoplexy, 254
 Regency, the, ii. inaugurated, 25; its startling *début*, 28; its dissipated character, 155
 Reilh, ii. 142
 Renaudot, Abbé, i. 33, 34, 52, 160
 Riancé, de, i. 16
 Richelieu, Madame de, i. 110
 Richelieu, Duc de, ii. his arrest ordered, 137; his many liaisons, 138; arrested, 139; at the age of twenty-four, 139; his amorous career, 140; in the Bastille, 140; visited by Mlles. de Charolais and de Valois, 148; nicknamed the *Duc de Conflans*, 178; ambition to marry Mlle. de Valois, 179; accompanies Mlle. de Valois, 181; ill-will towards Dubois, 224
 Rivière, de, i. 67
 Riom, ii. 173-174
 Robertson, Lord, ii. 90
 Robillard, i. 205
 Rohan, Cardinal de, i. 279
 — ii. 9, 223, 225
 Rosarges, ii. 141
 Rose, Mlle. i. 65, 67
 Rose, i. 109
 Rosen, i. 149
 Rousy, Comte de, i. 98, 110
 Sablière, Madame de la, i. 43, 154
 Sabran, Madame de, ii. 157, 188, 197
 Saint-Albin, i. 182
 — ii. 45
 Saint-Aignan, ii. 125
 Saint-Deaude, i. 125
 Saint-Evremond, i. 192
 Saint-Georges, the Chevalier de, ii. son of James II, 39; his character, 40; helps Dubois to get the hat, 202, 222
 Saint-Laurent, i. 28, 46, 47, 52, 53
 Saint-Mars, ii. 141
 Saint-Maure, i. 98
 Saint-Paul, i. 106
 Saint-Prié, ii. 47
 Saint-Ruth, i. 48
 Saint-Simon, i. 40; as a child, 58; favours the marriage of the Duc and Duchesse de Berri, 226; his character, 275; his fondness for heraldry, 276; marries Mlle. de Lorges, 277; informs the Duc d'Orléans of Louis XIV's will, 278
 — ii. present at the opening of Parliament, 20; member of the Council of Regency, 28; his opinion of Dubois, 105
 Saint-Victor, i. 121
 Saintrilles, i. 66
 Sandrasky, ii. 132
 Salvatico, ii. 182
 Saulnier, Le, i. 29, 34, 36
 Schaub, Chevalier, ii. 97
 Schlieben, ii. 132
 Schulembourg, Mlle. de, ii. 90
 Sébastien, Père, ii. 223, 224
 Ségnelay, i. 143
 Séguier, Abbé, i. 55
 Sennectère, Comte de, ii. 99, 225
 Séranne, i. 183
 Serre, Mlle. de, i. 69
 Sery, Mlle. de, i. introduced to the Duc de Chartres, 178; becomes Comtesse d'Argenton, 178; her son, the Chevalier d'Orléans, 180; firmly established, 205; dismissed, 250; regains the Duc d'Orléans; 266
 Sévigné, Madame de, i. 160, 161, 162
 Shomberg, Madame de, ii. 276
 Simiane, Madame de, i. 161
 — ii. 237
 Simiane, Comte de, i. 206, 219
 Sisteron, Bishop of, ii. 217
 Sotof, ii. 77, 78
 Soubise, Madame de, i. 76
 Sourdeval, ii. 45, 55, 66
 Soyecourt, de, i. 22
 Stairs, Earl, ii. ambassador in France, 2; as prophet, 3; acquaintance with Law, 35; mission to seize the Pretender, 40
 Stanhope, Lord, i. family antecedents, 195; friendship for Dubois, 195; his suppers, 196
 — ii. meets Dubois at the Hague, 43; at Amsterdam, 64; favours the Quadruple Alliance, 96

- Steinkerques*, i. 151
 Sunderland, Earl of, ii. 90
 Suze, Madame de la, i. 64, 204
- Tales*, La Fontaine's, i. 48, 49, 64
 Tallard, de, i. ambassador in London, 189; his character, 191; Dubois outrages his vanity, 198
 Targny, Abbé de, ii. 55
 Templars, the, i. 103
 Tencin, Madame de, ii. mistress of the Abbé Louvois, 107; aids Dubois, 120; Dubois' mistress and friend, 133; her portrait, 200-201; as Dubois' valet, 223
 Tencin, Abbé de, ii. 240
 Termes, i. 106
 Tessé, Maréchal de, ii. 77
 Tétu, Abbé, i. 161, 162
 Thérèse, Sœur, i. 87, 88
 Thévenot, i. 51, 57
 Tolstoy, ii. 63, 77
 Torcy, de, i. 197
 — ii. 28, 93
Total, Monseigneur, i. 67, 143
 Toulouse, Comte de, i. son of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, 107; his personal beauty and rectitude, 107; at the siege of Namur, 144; a member of the Council of Regency, 280
 Tours, Mlle. de, i. daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, 105; early death, 105
 Trémouille, Archbishop, ii. 202
 Triple Alliance, ii. Dubois' condition, 44; private convention signed, 60; the Treaty signed, 61; private convention annulled, 64
 Tressan, de, ii. 75, 220, 223
Turcaret, Lesage's, ii. 34
- Ursins, Princesse des, i. 242
 — ii. 132
 Utrecht, Treaty of, ii. 39
 Uxelles, Maréchal d', i. 98
- Valois, Mlle. de, ii. loved by Cellamare, 122; in love with Richelieu, 138; visits Richelieu in the Bastille, 148; her character, 177; becomes Princess of Modena, 180
- Varsenobre, ii. 241
 Vauban, Maréchal, i. his soldierly qualities, 145; at Namur, 149
 Vendôme Duc de, i. his uncleanness, 22; at the camp of Namur, 145
 Vendôme, Grand Prior of, i. his character, 146; his passion for Madame de Ludres, 146; a lady's vengeance, 146
 Vermandois, Comte de, i. son of Mlle. de la Vallière, 102; not the Iron Mask, 102; an infamous orgy, 103; in disgrace, 104; demands satisfaction of the Dauphin, 104; death before Courtrai, 104
 Ventadour, Madame de, i. 178, 179, 246
 — ii. 16, 70
 Verrue, Madame de, i. 246
 Vexin, Comte de, i. son of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, 105; early death, 105
 Victoire, Abbé de la, i. 179
 Vieuville, Madame de la, i. 48, 56, 58
 — ii. 184
 Vieuville, Duc de la, i. 82
 Villars, Maréchal de, ii. 139, 162, 171-172
 Villars, Maréchal de, ii. 93, 241
 Villequier, de, i. 40
 Villeroi, i. 66, 280
 — ii. 16, 28, 77, 80
 Visé, i. 158
 Vitry, Madame de, i. 58
 Vivonne, de, i. 119
 Voisin, Chancellor, i. 275
 Voltaire, Arouet de, i. an epigram, 269
 — ii. asks a question of Madame du Maine, 25; author of the *Œdipus*, 161; his appearance, 162; a conversation with the Regent, 164; the *Œdipus* performed, 165; a sarcasm, 212
- Walpole, Robert, ii. 50, 90, 110
 Walpole, Horace, ii. 58, 90
 Wassenaer, ii. 63
 Wilson, Mrs, ii. 36
- Yberville, d', ii. 49, 89

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



0032253532